Life of St. John

BIBLIOTHECA
FF. PRÆDICATORUM
CONVENTUS
CIVIT. BENITIÆ
Lit. 922
Pl. 265
2

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

St. John the Evangelist.

LIFE

OF THE

APOSTLE ST. JOHN.

BY

M. L. BAUNARD.

"He was the disciple whom Jesus loved."—JOHN xxi. 7.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FIRST FRENCH EDITION.

NEW YORK:
THE CATHOLIC PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
9 WARREN STREET.

1875.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1875, by
LAWRENCE KEHOE,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

Acc. 4511

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

CONTENTS.

PREFACE, ... 7

CHAPTER I.

ELECTION OF ST. JOHN.

St. John disciple of John the Baptist—Jesus Christ manifests himself to St. John near Bethany of the Jordan—The Lamb of God—John one of the two disciples who follow Jesus Christ—The virginity of John and the predilection of Jesus for the disciple, ... 17

CHAPTER II.

VOCATION OF ST JOHN.

Bethsaida, the land of St. John—The two sons of Zebedee the fisherman—Salome, mother of St. John—The good news borne to the fishermen of the lake of Tiberias—The wedding of Cana and the early memories of St. John—The brothers John and James called to the apostolate—Their renouncement, ... 31

CHAPTER III.

JOHN THE DISCIPLE OF CHARITY.

The familiar school of Jesus Christ; formation of the Apostles—Jesus teaches John the work of charity; resurrection of the daughter of Jairus—The spirit of charity; magnanimous tolerance; pardon of injuries towards Samaria; renouncing of honors—The chalice of Jesus Christ—The reward of charity: transfiguration, glory of sacrifice, ... 46

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN THE FAITHFUL WITNESS OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

Jesus Christ in Judea—Faithful remembrances of John—The visit of Nicodemus—The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well—The paralytic of the fountain; the resurrection of Lazarus—The personages of the Gospel according to St. John: Nicodemus, Caiphas, Pilate, the Pharisees—The word of Jesus in St. John, ... 61

CHAPTER V.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE EUCHARIST, ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

The reign of God in souls, the church, heaven—The promise of the Eucharist to the Capharnaites—The bread of *life*—The gift of infinite, perpetual, and universal *love*, ... 79

CHAPTER VI.

ST. JOHN AT THE LAST SUPPER.

The promises and the parables of the last week—Preparations for the Pasch by Peter and John—The first supper; the washing of the feet; the Eucharistic Supper—The communion of St. John—St. John and Judas—John the confidant of his Master's sorrows—The discourse after the Supper, thanksgiving; the adieu and the testament of Jesus, final prayer, ... 95

CHAPTER VII.

ST. JOHN AT THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

The passion of the heart of Jesus—The compassion of St. John—Gethsemani; the three chosen disciples, their sadness—St. John in the house of Caiphas, alone near Jesus; St. John at the foot of the cross, receives the adieu, the blood and the Mother of Jesus, ... 111

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. JOHN AT THE RESURRECTION.

John at the tomb of Jesus, the first who sees and who believes—John and Magdalen—Jesus in Galilee; John there meets the Master—The prophecy of Jesus to St. John—The glorious life of Jesus, according to St. John, 125

CHAPTER IX.

JOHN'S FIRST TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JEWS.

Union of John and Peter—Jerusalem under the Idumean kings and the Roman procurators—John and Peter heal the cripple of the Temple—Preach under Solomon's Porch—John and Peter in prison—John and Peter before the Council—Their testimony—The conquests of the Apostles in the Sanhedrim—Nicodemus, Gamaliel and his family, baptized by St. Peter and St. John, ... 138

CHAPTER X.

ST. JOHN IN SAMARIA—MARTYRDOM OF JAMES, HIS BROTHER.

St. John and Simon Magus in Samaria—The Word according to Simon—James the Just made Bishop of Jerusalem by Peter and John—Martyrdom of James the Great, the Council, and the dispersion, ... 156

CHAPTER XI.

ST. JOHN AND MARY—THE ASSUMPTION.

Mary remains at Jerusalem with John—James the Just near them—Mary inspires the Gospel—The death of the Blessed Virgin, according to tradition—Assumption and Coronation of Mary, ... 177

CHAPTER XII.

ST. JOHN AT EPHESUS—THE CHURCHES OF ASIA.

John sets out for Asia—Ephesus, her worship of Diana, her morals—The Jews at Ephesus, St. Paul at Ephesus—The Christians at Ephesus—John founds the churches of Asia—Charity of St. John at Ephesus; his miracles, . 196

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF EPHESUS, ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN AND ST. PAUL.

Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians—Constitution of the Church at Ephesus—The bishops angels of the churches—The priests—The deacons—The widows and the virgins—Holiness, laws of justice and of charity—Collections—Agapes—Worship in the primitive Church, ... 218

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. JOHN AND GNOSTICISM.

Coalition of Judaic and Hellenic Gnosticism—Cerinthus, his life, his errors refuted in St. John—The Nicolaites, their depravity; Ephesus resists them—Magic at Ephesus—Apollonius of Tyana opposed to St. John, . . 244

CHAPTER XV.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

The three Evangelists preceding—John writes the Gospel, at the request of the disciples, against the Gnostics—Fragment of the canon found by Muratori—John completes the other three Gospels, restores them to order, and draws thence the proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ—The character of the Gospel of St. John, ... 272

CHAPTER XVI.

DOCTRINE OF THE WORD MADE FLESH, ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

John opposes to the Joannites the testimony of John the Baptist—John refutes the Gnostics—The Word with the Jews and with the philosophers—Prologue of the Gospel of St. John—The Word in God, the Word in the world, the Word in souls, ... 296

CHAPTER XVII.

DIVINE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST IN ST. JOHN.

Divine intelligence of Jesus and of his word—Divine courage of the soul of Jesus—Infinite love of Jesus, ... 315

CHAPTER XVIII.

FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN—PREFACE OF HIS GOSPE—THE LAW OF CHARITY.

First Epistle, introduction of the Gospel addressed to the faithful—Charity—Religious law, love of God—Moral law, resemblance to God—Social law, fraternal love in God, ... 327

CHAPTER XIX.

ST. JOHN AT THE LATIN GATE.

Christians at Rome under Domitian—Persecuted by the Emperor—St. John at Rome—St. Clement, Pope, and Hermas—Martyrdom and deliverance at the Latin Gate, ... 337

CHAPTER XX.

ST. JOHN AT PATMOS.

Ancient and modern Patmos—Traditions of the island regarding the exile of the Apostle—Miracle of the poisoned chalice—John condemned to the mines—Letter of Dionysius to St. John, ... 355

CHAPTER XXI.

THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN.

The place of the Apocalypse—Its authenticity—Vision of St. John—Warning to the churches of Asia—The preaching and the policy of God—Ruin of Rome and the triumph of the Church—Heaven of the Apocalypse, union with God—John is recalled from Patmos, ... 363

CHAPTER XXII.

RETURN TO EPHESUS—EPISTLE TO ELECTA.

Martyrdom of St. Timothy—St. John and St. Dionysius at Ephesus—John writes to Electa—Charity and truth, ... 383

CHAPTER XXIII.

EPISTLE TO GAIUS—THE YOUTH CONVERTED.

Caius the Corinthian—Christian hospitality—Troubles of the Church—Diotrephes—The young man adopted by St. John—His perversion and his conversion, ... 393

CHAPTER XXIV.

SCHOOL OF ST. JOHN—HIS DEATH.

Disciples of St. John—St. Ignatius—St. Polycarp—Papias—Letter of St. Irenæus—Influence of the Gospel in the empire at the close of the first century—Closing days of St. John—Precept of charity—Traditions regarding the death of the Apostle—Conclusion, ... 402

PREFACE.

A FEW years since I repaired to Rome about the time of Holy Week. I was drawn thither by my tastes, my studies, and still more forcibly, perhaps, by that inclination which leads to that city all those who seek the repose of the soul, and, as it were, the more sensible presence of God.

On the morning of Holy Thursday I quitted the city, avoiding the immense crowd of pilgrims who besieged St. Peter's, and directed my steps towards the ancient Lateran Basilica. It was one of those delicious spring days, peculiar to Italy, which fill the soul with a thousand confused thoughts of hope and of life. I was alone. Solitude likewise reigned over those vast spaces, strewn thickly with plants and with ruins, which separate St. Mary Major from Sta. Croce in Jerusalem. Rome lay in the distance. The cupola of St. Peter's rose brilliantly and majestically on the horizon.

I was always struck by the symbolism which, while instituting the Basilica of St. Peter the vast metropolis of Catholicity, had selected the church dedicated to St. John as the cathedral of the Eternal City, and, as it were, the heart whence was to flow into the Christian body blood, life, and love; but I had never before felt myself so close to that heart.

It was my first visit to the sanctuary of the beloved disciple. A few faithful were praying, scattered over the marble pavement. The canons were solemnly celebrating the Mass of the day. Beside the altar, enshrined in gold and surrounded with lights, a wooden table was exposed

to public veneration. I was informed that it was the table at which the Lord was seated by the side of St. John at the Last Supper. A deacon read the Gospel; it was that portion wherein John says that "Jesus having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end." The priest consecrated the Host. I adored the same Jesus who had supported the head of St. John upon that breast where all languid heads and broken hearts alone find true repose. Twelve colossal statues of white marble were arranged along both sides of the nave; they were the images of those who had communicated beside St. John. All the cenacle was there, magnificent and immense, as the Lord had formerly bidden St. John to prepare it—*cœnaculum grande, cœnaculum stratum.* The Apostle was everywhere, and, whilst his temple recalled the memory of his joys, without, on the contrary, presented the picture of his grief. Two paces distant the steps of the *Scala Santa*—Holy Stairs—represented the pretorium, or Judgment Hall; the Church of Sta. Croce revived the thought of Calvary; and near there, in the foreground of that calm and solemn Campagna Romana, yawned the Latin Gate, where the disciple had the honor of suffering for God without having obtained the happiness of dying for him.

Who has not experienced during his life some of those blessed hours wherein one feels under the influence and as if under the charm of a being who overrules and of a thought which subjugates? I was under the charm of St. John; and it was in the light of that spot and of that day that the celestial physiognomy of the Apostle beamed upon me for the first time. I imagined that I saw and felt him, and, wishing likewise to hear him, I took his Gospel and I entered the cloister of St. John Lateran, in order silently to converse with him.

It would be difficult to find a more beautiful spot than that cloistered enclosure, with its marble galleries, its vast colonnade, and the monastic well which the reli-

gious have named the well of the Samaritan woman. I know not how long I remained in that place, reading and meditating; but I did not quit it without a feeling of emotion which I could not repress. I passed there a half-day of which I beg Heaven to keep me in everlasting remembrance; and that very evening I wrote to my friends in France that, would God give me the strength, I should be happy to undertake a history of St. John, and to return at some future day to deposit it in homage at the same spot.

The former of these promises I now fulfil. It will not be my fault that I do not accomplish the latter.

It further seemed to me that there could be, in our day of darkness and of coldness, no more present history than that of that great heart and of that brilliant genius. It responds to the most vital questions of these times, as well as to the most religious need of souls—the question of truth and the need of charity.

It forms the eternal honor of the Son of God made man to be the great object which divides minds and which impassions hearts. He had been only forty days in the world when an aged man of the Temple, taking him in his arms, could declare that he was to be the sign of contradiction raised amid nations. Who is the priest this day who, presenting Jesus Christ living in his word, or living upon his altar, cannot say as much? Who does not perceive that, since the incarnation of the Word, there is but one sovereign question here below—that of Jesus Christ, God living, God present and filling the world, which endeavors, but vainly, to dispense with him?

The unbridling of atheism, of which we are witnesses, has no other end. Such rage is not awakened against the metaphysical and distant god of deism. They hate but that which lives, and Jesus Christ alone is the cause. All that vast upheaving of sophisms and of blasphemies

is the trial of the Gospel, which, gained from age to age, is ever reproduced under a different form. And since the investigation pursued against her grows bolder, more violent, and more bitter than ever, we will not elude it; but, strong with the right of God, the duty of Christians is to produce their documents and to bring forward their witnesses.

It is the most weighty as well as the best informed of the latter whom I have endeavored to evoke in this work. The enemies of Jesus Christ, even those most opposed to his divinity, do not seek to deny it: the Gospel of St. John is decisive, teaching the Word made flesh; and for that reason it has been, since the time of Julian the Apostate, the lists wherein the sophists have sworn to conquer or to die. Strauss wrote of him: "One and indivisible, protected, so to say, by its originality as by an armor, the Gospel of St. John seemed to challenge criticism to a deadly duel. Either it must shatter its arms, and lay the remnants at the feet of the Gospel, or it must despoil it of all historical authority."[1]

The entire debate, therefore, turns upon that authority which, on the other hand, the most intellectual minds, even the most dissenting, now agree in recognizing. I have not undertaken to discuss and to demonstrate it in this book point by point; history does not seem to me made for such disquisitions. But, as far as it may lie in my power, I will elucidate the works by throwing light upon the life. The true physiognomy of the disciple, as it were lost under the nimbus, will resume in this essay the clearly historic character of his features. For that purpose, far from inventing, I shall have even little to teach Christians which is not already known to them. But facts will speak for themselves by their succession. History, as it appears to me, will result from the writings, in the same manner as the writings will find in history a full confirmation of their authenticity.

[1] Strauss, *New Life of Jesus*, vol. i. p. 137.

Thus the Apostle will enable us the better to understand the Evangelist. And when, having previously followed the Apostle to the school of John the Baptist, we see him bringing to the school of Jesus Christ that virginity, that magnanimity, that courageous tenderness, and that fidelity which have gained him the appellation of the chosen disciple—*quem diligebat*—we will understand primarily that it is thus that must have been formed the Evangelist of charity.

When thence we shall contemplate him in the suite of Jesus, the most intimate confidant of the words of life, gathering up their doctrine, basking in their light, inspiring himself with their tone, hanging breathlessly on the lips of his Master, the nearest to his celestial glory upon Thabor, to his heart at the Last Supper, to his cross on Calvary, we will easily understand how the Apostle could style himself pre eminently the witness of the Truth.

Finally, when, following St. John to the Ionian shores, we shall find him amid the Gnostics of the East, under the shades of the schools of learned Ephesus, mingling with the mystic sects and the theosophies of Asia and of Egypt, prolonging his old age in that antagonism against brilliant errors, writing in a century equally curious of science and of marvels, we shall understand what should necessarily be the language of the Evangelist of the Word and of the theologian of his divinity.

These divers conditions of age, of country, and of time, will be an explanation of the Gospel as clear as it is simple. The text will likewise receive its commentary—the most natural, perhaps, which it is possible to make; for it will be that of history itself. And the disciple of John the Baptist, the beloved Apostle of Jesus, the intimate associate of the preaching, of the Passion, of the glory, the adopted son of Mary, the Evangelist of the Word, the prophet of Patmos, the pastor of Ephesus, the missionary of Ionia, identifying himself in one sole per-

sonality—we must indeed agree, even did the Gospel itself not so declare it, that "John hath written these things, and that we know that his testimony is true."

But John does not isolate himself from the apostolic age. The first entire historic phase of the Church is filled with his name. It is the *Church of the Cœnaculum* which precedes and prepares the Church of the Catacombs. Thus has been named the period of foundation which John saw commence with the ministry of Christ, and of which his long life was the measure and the limit.

The first period of that life of the disciple was passed in Palestine, where John dwelt beside Jesus and Mary. There, with James and Peter, he founds the primitive Christendom of Jerusalem.

The second portion glides away in the bosom of Grecian Asia. There, upon that native land of all symbols and of all systems, between the spirits of Pytho, the priests of Cybele, and the great Diana of the Ephesians, John writes his Gospel, and develops in a new tongue the sublime doctrine of the Word of God made man. He it is who, with Paul, is the founder and the father of that Church of the East which is the object in our own day of so much solicitude and so many anxious wishes.

Whatever be the triumphs of past centuries, a predilection attaches itself to the commencement of that young society of which Peter was the head, of which Paul was the arm, of which John was the heart. The cœnaculum exhales forth something of the charm of the childhood of Jesus when he grew in age, in wisdom, and grace before God and before men.

The dearest souvenirs of history are, therefore, there. But are there not there likewise, together with our beginning, the titles of our faith, the laws of our life, and the key to the questions which divide the world? What is Christianity in its inspiration? What is the holy Church in her institution? What is the apostolate and the pon-

tificate? Finally, what is the Gospel? From what hand did it come? In what age was it born? Under what breath has it developed? All these questions suddenly spring up in this our century. It is thence that all starts, it is thither that all returns. And if there be a page of religious history fundamental above all others, it is pre-eminently that of the origin of the Christian Church.

There is no doubt regarding the frightful confusion reigning amongst even the most cultivated minds with respect to the holy beginnings of the mother country of which they claim themselves sons. For them, for the greater part, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John, lost in a species of legendary aureola, appear like the heroes of a mythology which has preceded the era of positive history. John more especially has remained under the cloud. For some, John the Apostle is not the same personage as John the Evangelist. For others, the Evangelist is totally distinct from the prophet of the Apocalypse. Are there not even some who identify the son of Zebedee with the son of Zacharias? But how many who know him and who follow him in the Gospel lose all trace of him while he is at Ephesus, and for whom a half-century of that divinely-beautiful existence disappears under the mist of a vague tradition wherein they can distinguish nothing!

It is in order to reconquer for positive history that complete existence that I have undertaken this work. May it in some measure spread around the pure and immortal splendor of the strong and at the same time gentle physiognomy of the Apostle St. John!

We should deceive ourselves, in fact, did we see in him but the type of inert and languid tenderness, as we might be led to believe from painting and from legend. We remember that John styles himself the beloved disciple; we too readily forget that Jesus named him "the son of Thunder." We willingly recognize in him the Evangelist of the Lamb; we forget that that Lamb was the heroïc

victim, and that to love him is to follow him even to immolation. We remember that John demanded a place of honor at the right hand of his King; we forget that even then he engaged to drink of his chalice of bitterness, and that he kept his word. We see him, at the Last Supper, leaning upon the bosom of Jesus; we do not sufficiently contemplate him standing upright upon Calvary and at the foot of the cross. Let us not misunderstand it; the love which John represents are the supernatural energies of the passion of which he himself says: "Fear is not in charity: but perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain. And he that feareth, is not perfected in charity."[2]

Perfection, for him, did not consist in contemplation, but in action and in suffering. The glorious mountain of the Transfiguration was but the stepping-stone to that of the Crucifixion. If he reposes in ecstasy upon the bosom of his Master, he does not slumber there. "Rise and let us be going!" It is to deadly combat that his Lord summons him; and no one, later, endured nor challenged more glorious struggles than himself. He refuted Gnosticism, detested Nicolaism, anathematized Cerinthus and his errors; he suffered for justice and hated iniquity; he cursed Rome, inebriated with voluptuousness and with blood; he suspended over the head of sacrilegious nations the stroke of divine scourges; he roused from their torpidity the churches of Asia, and denounced stains even in their angels. Writing to the young Christendom which he had called into being, St. John especially congratulates her upon being strong. He speaks but of struggles, of triumphs, and of victories. He has passed through fire, he has supported exile, he desires death: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" For, to prove that he loves, it is too little to suffer if he cannot die.

Could that soul and that existence be worthily reproduced in this book, such as I have just enumerated them?

[2] 1 John iv. 18.

It would be folly to hope it. "Oh!" said St. Augustine to his Christians of Hippo, in his explanation of the Gospel of St. John, "I who here address you, can I forget who I am, and upon what subject I treat? I treat upon divine things, and I am but a man. I treat of things of the mind, and I am in the flesh. I treat of things eternal, and I am but a mortal. Far from me, my beloved, the vain presumption of fathoming these mysteries."[3]

"But," added that great man, "the lessons which I offer you, according to my capacity, I first apply them to myself. Perhaps it is daring thus to seek to scrutinize the words of God. But, if we cannot penetrate to the source, let us drink together at the stream."[4]

"Come, then," said St. Chrysostom, addressing his flock of Antioch—"come, for it is not an actor, an athlete, or a celebrated rhetorician whom you are about to hear. It is a man whose voice resounded like thunder in the heavens. The universe was captivated by that voice inspired by grace; for, although it fills the world, it is full of inexpressible harmony. That Child of Thunder, whom Jesus loved, who is one of the columns of the Church on earth, who drank of the chalice of Jesus, who saw heaven open, and who sweetly reposed upon the bosom of his Master, comes amongst you to-day. A grand spectacle is about to present itself: the whole heavens are the stage, the entire earth is the theatre, all the angels are the audience, and with them men who are or who desire to be like to the angels. However, John is an unlearned and uncultivated man, a fisherman of Bethsaida, the son of Zebedee! What can we learn from that man of Galilee, who understands but his trade of fishing? Will he not speak to us of nets and of fish? No, he will speak to us upon heavenly things unknown before him. That philosopher has drawn all his wisdom from the treasury of

[3] S. Aug. *in Joan. Tract.* xviii. cap. v. col. 1536.
[4] Id. Ibid. et *Tract.* xii. col. 1571.

the Holy Ghost, and it will cast into the shade all the sublime thoughts of Pythagoras and of Plato!"[5]

The great bishop concluded his discourse by beseeching his hearers to bring to the study of the holy Evangelist uprightness of intention and purity of heart. Without having the same titles, I demand for this work of doctrine and of piety the same dispositions of heart and of mind.

It is a book of doctrine. I address it to all those who desire to instruct themselves in the truth of God. Truth has no school superior to that of the Gospel, and nowhere does she show herself more profound and more beautiful than in the Gospel of St. John.

It is a book of piety. I dedicate it to Christians; to priests—the priesthood has no higher personification than St. John; to virgins—John was a virgin; to mothers—he merited to be given as son to the Mother of God; to youth—he was the youngest of the Apostles; to old men—it is the name he gives himself in his letters. I offer it to suffering souls—he was at the Cross; to contemplative souls—he was on Mount Thabor; to all souls who wish to devote themselves to their brethren and to love them in God—charity can have no purer ideal than the friend of Jesus.

I would that such a work might possibly not prove useless in the library of the man who doubts and searches. But I should be supremely happy that it found its place upon the prie-dieu, between the crucifix and the statue of the Virgin.

The faithful who may read it will find therein, in the disciple whom Jesus loved, the triple predilection of the Church in our own day: the worship of the Eucharist, that of the Sacred Heart, and the veneration of Mary.

Such is the aim of this volume. Such also, I trust, is the utility it may bring to men and the honor it may procure for God.

Orleans, Holy Thursday, March 25, 1869.

[5] Chrysost. *in Joan. Homil.* i.

Life of the Apostle St. John.

CHAPTER I.

ELECTION OF ST. JOHN.

I.

THIRTY years had elapsed since our Lord Jesus Christ had come into the world, and nothing announced that the Word made flesh dwelt among us. The angels who had glorified his manger had returned into the highest heavens; the Magi were afar; Simeon had died after having seen the Saviour promised to Israel; Joseph likewise had gone to his final repose; the Temple of Jerusalem had forgotten that Child of twelve years of age, of too precocious wisdom not to be divine; since that day twenty years had passed away in their turn, and the most absolute silence reigned around the obscure house of Nazareth which sheltered the hope and the salvation of the world.

We cannot repress a feeling of profound emotion when, glancing over the history of the period of time which elapsed from the thirty-first year of Cæsar Augustus to the fifteenth year of Tiberius, we reflect that a God made man filled that interval with his visible presence and with his mortal existence. But it is impossible to discover its action in the general movement of events. The century was given up to those corrupt and corrupting ways of which Tacitus has spoken. The sole god then incarnate

was Augustus or Tiberius. The old Roman Empire was drawing to its downfall, without even suspecting that it bore in its bosom the very Author of life, and the Creator of all things counted for nothing in the world.

His hour was not yet come. Only, during that time, the dwellers in Galilee saw daily mingling amongst them a man of great goodness, "whose voice was not heard in the streets,"[1] repairing to his labor under the orders of a man no less poor than himself. And as nothing indicated that it was the Son of God, they said one to the other, "Is not this the carpenter's son?"[2]

Such was the state of affairs when, in the fifteenth year of the empire of Tiberius, the seven hundred and eighty-fourth of the foundation of Rome, the thirtieth of the vulgar era, under the consulate of Appius Julius Silanus and of Publius Silius Nerva, according to the calculations of learned chronologists, early in the spring, and about the thirteenth day of the month of Nisan, which corresponds to our month of March, that divine Artisan descended into Judea upon the banks of the Jordan.[3]

He had not as yet begun the conquest of the kingdom of souls, and it was not fitting, for that time at least, that the *éclat* of miracles should surround his name; for that which he came to seek along the sacred stream was not a crowd of worshippers. Jesus sought first a friend poor and unknown like himself.

Human intimacies had been celebrated, but none had ever yet witnessed the nameless tenderness of a divine friendship. God had that inclination to bend himself towards a man, and to love him as if he had been his equal.

[1] Matt. xii. 19. [2] Matt. xiii. 55.

[3] See Dr. Reithmayr, *Chronology of the Gospels*, vol. ii. p. 142; Waller, upon the fifteenth year of Tiberius, in *The Belief due to the Gospel*, 2d edition, p. 375. Cornelius à Lapide, *Chronotaxis Evangeliorum*, n. 10, 11.

Accustomed from all eternity to dwell in the unity of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, he sought upon earth the society of a soul who was the outpouring and the image of his own. It was for that meeting that Jesus appeared upon the bank of the river in that simple manner which excluded fear and which attracted love.

There was upon that shore a spot named in the Hebrew tongue Beth-Abara,[4] and which the Gospel likewise styles Beth-Hania, or "the house of vessels." It was at that place that the Hebrews had forded the Jordan under the guidance of Joshua, and it was customary to station thither ferry-boats for the convenience of travellers.

As it was a spot greatly frequented because of the toll-house, John, son of Zachary, selected it to confer baptism. He held there no school of human philosophy, inconstant, and given up to every wind of doctrine, "like the reeds of the shore." He did not there display the arrogant splendor of courts, "like those who dwell in kings' houses." But his life was serene, his nourishment poor, his clothing coarse, his doctrine that of penance, and his person still more austere than his discourse. His school was that of the life of sacrifice, the necessary novitiate of the law of love.

It is there, in the society of the greatest of prophets, that we first see John, the future apostle. It is proven, in fact, that, besides the multitudes who flocked to receive baptism from the Precursor, there were "his disciples," whom, after the example of the prophets, he initiated into the secrets of a higher doctrine, preparing them in solitude and recollection for the approaching revelations of the kingdom of heaven. John was one of that faithful band, one of those

[4] *Beth-Abara* in Hebrew signifies crossing. It is the same name as *Beth-Hania*, Bethany, as it is written in some Greek manuscripts, and which signifies "the house of vessels." There was another Bethany, in Judea, wherein Lazarus dwelt. According to Emanuel Deutsch, it signifies "the house of misery."—TRANSLATOR.

"sons of the prophet," as they are styled in the Scriptures.[5] Without positively naming himself—John never names himself—he points himself out as such throughout his Gospel. It is by that title that he sought to inaugurate his book by "the testimony of John," of whom he himself has collected and continued the teaching. It is by that title that he heard John, his master, declare that he was neither the Christ nor Elias, but the voice of one crying in the desert, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!" It is under that title that he can relate so faithfully the altercations of the disciples of John the Baptist with those of Jesus, and the various apparitions of the Lord upon the shore where he was baptized. He will soon show himself at that school, and the holy interpreters unanimously agree in recognizing his place amongst those events of which the great Evangelist has alone constituted himself the historian, because he had been more particularly their witness.

St. John has related to us the discourses by which the prophet had formed his soul, and the hopes by which he had prepared him for the adoration of Him who was to come. In his recital we do not find those stern invectives of the Precursor to the crowd of Pharisees, of sinners, of publicans, and of soldiers, gathered, says St. Luke, from all the country about the Jordan to see that man who "came in the spirit and power of Elias." It is especially

[5] St. Chrysostom, *in Joan. Homil.* xvii. p. 16. St. Epiphanius, *Hær.* li. cap. xiv. p. 436, and all the authors cited below, p. 27, note 21. And amid Protestant critics: "Young Galileans attached themselves to the person of John the Baptist, and declared themselves his disciples. They assisted him in his ministry, and, like him, baptized the multitude. The Precursor instructed them, and formed them to the religious life. He seems even to have taught them a formula of prayer (Luke xi. 1). John grew up amid these surroundings, the most favorable to prepare him for his future mission. The Baptist had no more faithful disciple."—Pressensé, *Jesus Christ, his Time, his Life, his Work*, pp. 219-239.

of the Son of God that there is question in St. John, and behold what the future Evangelist of the Word heard announced of Him who was soon to baptize souls with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

"You yourselves do bear me witness, that I said: I am not CHRIST; but that I am sent before him. . . . He must increase, but I must decrease; for he that cometh from above is above all.

"He that is of the earth is earthy, and of the earth he speaketh; but he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and he who hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for the Father loveth the Son: he hath not given him the spirit by measure; but he hath given all things into his hand.

"He therefore that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting." [6]

That mysterious, more than human personage, of whom St. John Baptist "thought himself unworthy to loose the latchet of his shoes" to wash his feet, "was already in the world, and the world knew it not." He was that same Jesus whose presence had formerly caused him to leap in his mother's womb, and of whom he proclaimed himself the

[6] John iii. 28-36. I am well aware that certain critics, like Tholuck (p. 329), attribute these reflections to the evangelist, not considering them as a sermon of the Precursor. "For our part," says Wallon, "we are not unprepared to admit, with Dr. Strauss, that the rest of the passage is entirely from St. John. How could we affirm that the soul of the Precursor might not have been enlightened by a ray of the light which he announced? And wherefore he who leaped within his mother's womb at the voice of the Mother of the Saviour, should he not feel at the time of the public manifestation of Jesus himself a movement of that holy enthusiasm which inspired the canticle of his father? Therefore Bossuet does not hesitate to comment the whole passage as being from St. John Baptist."—Wallon, *The Belief due to the Gospel*, p. 453.

Precursor, the voice crying in the desert, the pioneer sent before him to prepare the way, the paranymph who stands beside the bridegroom to serve him and to do him honor.

That which the son of Zachary announced regarding the future Redeemer of Israel, therefore, exceeded the measure of purely earthly praise. It is thence that the disciple drew the first idea of the divinity of Him who was soon to become his Master. Those who, marvelling at his sublime doctrine, have asked themselves in which philosophical school of the East, of Egypt, of Greece, or of Rome, the Evangelist of the Word had received his instruction, should have remembered the school of the Precursor. He was his first master in that theology. The Evangelist received it from the prophet St. John; the prophet had learned it in the school of her who had once exclaimed in adoration, "Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" It was the school of Elizabeth, it was the school of Mary, it was the school of the Annunciation, the very school of God.

II.

It was about a year that the disciples had listened to the praises of the Son of God; they therefore were eagerly longing for his arrival, when finally the Lord appeared upon the sacred shores of Bethany.

It was the tenth hour after sunrise, remarks John the Evangelist—that is to say, about our fourth or fifth hour of the evening—and John the Baptist had with him only two of his disciples.[7]

Who were these disciples? The Evangelist says that one of them was Andrew, the brother of Simon; the other he does not name. "This silence of the historian," says a

[7] John i. 35.

learned critic, "where he names all the others, and when we know his manner of speaking of himself, sufficiently designates him."[8] There is always one whom St. John does not name; that one is himself. Furthermore, here, in this careful, precise, and circumstantial account, everything tends to point him out. It is John who, from the commencement, to acquit his debt of gratitude, has sought to signalize that ever-memorable hour wherein his divine Friend appeared to him for the first time.

It was the solemn hour, remarks Bossuet, at which the priests of the Temple of Jerusalem, immolating a lamb, were accustomed to offer the evening sacrifice.[9] The Precursor, beholding the divine Saviour Jesus approach, took occasion to point him out by these words only: "Behold the Lamb of God."

The closing word of the prophecies was thus uttered by the last of the prophets. None could throw a clearer light over the divine and human physiognomy of the Word-Redeemer. Jesus Christ is the Lamb—that is to say, primarily, the holy one of God, according to the sense of that word in sacred speech.[10] There is no spot in him. In

[8] Wallon, *The Belief due to the Gospel*, ch. v. p. 196. Dr. F. Reithmayr, *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 88–96 transl. Valroger: "When St. John Baptist began to preach penance in Perea, our Evangelist became his disciple, and remained with him until the day on which John Baptist told him, as well as Andrew, that Jesus was the Son of God, the Lamb who was to redeem the world." Stolberg, *Life of Christ*, vol. i. ch. i. p. 165, deduces very convincing proofs of this fact. Tillemont, *Memoirs upon Church History*, vol. i. p. 430. And among ancient authors: St. Chrysostom, *in cap.* i. *Evan. Joan.*, *Homil.* xviii., p. 116: "Quare alterius nomen non ponitur? Quia ipse est qui scribit Joannes." St. Epiphanius; St. Cyril, *in Catena;* Euthymius; Alcuin; Theophylact; St. Thomas Aquinas; Beda, apud Maldonat, *in Joan*, cap. i. 40; Cornelius à Lapide, *ibid.*

[9] Bossuet, *Elevations upon the Mysteries*, 34th week, 4th elevation, p. 363

[10] Ἴδε ὁ Ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, Joan. i. 36. This word ἀμνός signifies, in the Greek original, innocent, pure, and holy: "De Christe Ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, quippè ὡς ἀμνὸς ἀμωμος καὶ ἄσπιλος." (See Suicer, apud Henr. Stephan., *Thesaurum Græcæ Linguæ*, ed. Didot, ad vocem Ἀμνός.) The Latin word *Agnus*, from Ἀγνός, pure, has the same signification.

him alone innocence is a reality, and that absolutely pure thing, which, since our original stain, was but a regret and a remembrance in this world, had just descended amongst us from the very bosom of God.[11]

The lamb is holiness; but it is likewise gentleness. Behold him! He comes not in that terror which formerly shook the summit of the mountain. It is no longer the law of fear, it is the law of grace; it is no more the lion of Juda, it is the gentle "Lamb of God."[12]

He comes to inaugurate the reign of charity; and as there is no greater love than the gift of his life, behold that name of Lamb—the symbol of holiness, the emblem of gentleness—will excellently signify the Host of the Sacrifice. It required to be so pure! There had been so many centuries that this guilty world had demanded from virtue, from youth, from beauty, from all the graces of the soul, of age, and of life, an immaculate blood which could pay its ransom, and which would satisfy God! The ransom will be paid: *Ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi.* And this time the victim will be worthy of God, for the victim is God: *Agnus Dei.* The week prophesied by Daniel in which the new sacrifice will be offered is already begun, and the third Easter will see the raising of the altar whereon the Lamb will be immolated, whereon the Lamb will be eaten, whereon the Victim, as the prophet said formerly, will be treated like a sheep led to the slaughter.

There will thenceforth be no other sacrifice upon the altars of the earth. When God shall be angered, when men shall suffer, when hearts shall faint with hunger and shall seek for life, it will be the same Victim who will ap-

[11] "Iste enim singulariter dicitur *Agnus*, solus sine peccato: non cujus maculæ abstersæ sunt, sed cujus macula nulla fuerit."—S. Aug., *in Joan. Tract.* vi.

[12] "Quando venit tempus ut misereretur Deus, venit Agnus, et sanguine Agni victus est Leo."—S. Aug., *in Joan. Tract.* vii. cap. i. 6.

pease God, it will be the same Host which will be given to men with the same words: *Ecce Agnus Dei.*

Finally, there will also be no other sacrifice offered upon the altars of heaven. And when, the heavens opening over the head of St. John, the apostle could descry somewhat of those eternal feasts, as was shown him in his Apocalypse, it was that same Lamb, with that same holiness, that same gentleness, that same Victim offered from the beginning, whom he had met upon the banks of the Jordan, whom he had beheld suffering upon Calvary, and whom the angel showed him crowned in glory: *Ecce Agnus Dei.*[13]

That divine appellation must necessarily be met with in the writings of St. John. It is a striking particularity in the style of the great Evangelist, and all the interpreters opine that he acquired it from John the Baptist, his master.[14]

However, the two disciples, hearing that remark of the divine Precursor for the first time, could thence but slightly fathom the mystery. They understood, at least, that there was question of the Messiah, and they immediately followed that new King.[15]

They walked behind him, observes St. John himself, doubtless curiously and religiously, the length of the sacred river. It is probable, here adds St. Chrysostom, that, knowing themselves still so simple and so uncultivated, they feared to approach him, and kept at a distance through timidity and from respect.[16] But Jesus turned

[13] Apoc. xiv. 1 et sq.

[14] "Joannes in Apocalypsi gaudet Christum vocare Agnum, quasi qui hoc nomen audierit et imbiberit a magistro suo Joanne Baptista."—Cornel. à Lapide, *in Joan.* i. 36.

[15] John i. 37.

[16] "Credibile erat eos subvereri et formidare cum se rudes intelligerent, et tantum de illo magistri accepissent testimonium."—St. Chrysostom, *Homil. in Joan.* cap. i. 38.

and came forward to meet them. "What seek you?" said he to them. That was effectually to ask them to whom they would appertain; and thus, in fact, did both understand him, for they immediately answered: "Master, where dwellest thou?" That name of Master was already a preliminary engagement to belong to him.[17]

And yet God does not wish us so quickly to solve the question of life and of eternity. It is after deep consideration that we should give ourselves to him; a trial is necessary. "Come and see," he says. They went, therefore. They repaired to the dwelling-place of Him who had not a stone whereon to rest his head, and "they both stayed with him that day."[18]

"But what had they then seen, what had they then discovered, in him whom they met?" enquires St. Augustine. "O disciples! what color has then appeared to you? What form, what beauty of body? Nothing of all that; and whence comes your attraction? It is because divine beauty has manifested itself to you in one of its rays. Is it a beauty which can strike the eyes? No; it is the incorruptible beauty of justice, of holiness, and of virtue—a beauty which the interior eye can always perceive, and which attracts it in proportion to its purity."[19]

Now, St. John was pure.

According to the well-based calculation of the doctors of the Church, he was at that time about twenty-five years old—the age at which a man became a priest or a soldier.[20] Christian iconography generally represents him with the features of youth. But it was another grace, more

[17] John i. 38. Bede, *in hunc locum*: "Quando dicunt *Rabbi*, id est Magister, et sequuntur eum, utique magistrum sequuntur et dicunt."

[18] John i. 39.

[19] St. Aug., *De divers. Sermon.*, xxvii. c. 6.

[20] Tillemont, *Mem. Eccles. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 607, note xv. p 608. He deduces it with great precision from the time of his death, which happened in the year 100 of the vulgar era; according to Eusebius, in 104; according to the Chronicle of Alexandria, aged from ninety-seven to one hundred years.

interior, rarer, and entirely immaterial, which had drawn upon him the notice of Jesus. All the Fathers have repeated it, and the entire Church proclaims it, That young man was a virgin. Under the reign of Tiberius and in the land of Herod, in that pagan Galilee which was styled "Galilee of the nations," full of every delight and captivating enchantment, John had remained chaste.[21]

We shall never clearly comprehend the profound affinity which exists between the purity and the virginity of man and the inviolable perfection of that Being, entirely spirit, who, far beyond our matter, hears myriads of beings, spiritual like himself, eternally repeat to him that he is the Holy of Holies! "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God."[22] These words were a never-ending compact between God and souls wholly enamored of his austere beauty. The holiest amongst the future apostles was, in fact, the first one of them to behold him; and the disciple had immediately followed Jesus Christ through that attraction of virginity which is the law of time, and which is likewise the law of eternity. "In heaven," says St. John, "the virgins follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."[23]

It was already evening. "The disciples and the Master remained together the whole day," says St. John, which,

[21] Tertullian, *Lib. de Monogamia*, cap. xvii. p. 688. St. Aug., *in Joan. Homil.* cxxiv., cxix.; *De Virginibus*, cap. xlix. St. Jerome, *in Isaiam*, cap. lvi. 4; *in Jovinianum*, lib. i. cap. xiv. St. Ambrose, *De Institutione Virgin.*, cap. vii. p. 423. St. Ignatius, martyr, *ad Philadelph.*, Ὁ ἀγαπητὸς μαθητὴς ἐν ἀγνείᾳ ἐξέλθε τοῦ βίου. Theophylact, *in Joan. Proœmium*, op. t. i. p. 1554. S. Epiphan, *Hær.* lxxviii. c. xviii. p. 491. I will quote merely the text of St. Jerome, which condenses all the others: "Joannes unus ex discipulis, qui minimus ætate traditur fuisse inter apostolos, quem fides Christi virginem repererat, virgo permansit. Et ideo plus amatur a Domino et recumbit super pectus ejus. Exposuit virginitas quod nuptiæ scire non poterant. Et ut brevi sermone cuncta comprehendam doceamque cujus privilegii sit Joannes: A Domino virgine mater virgo virgini discipulo commendatur."—*Contra Jovin.*, cap. i. 26.

[22] Matt. v. 8.

[23] Apoc. xiv. 4.

after the manner of reckoning of the Hebrews, also comprehends the night.[24] The night, therefore, continued the communications of the day. It was entirely passed, adds St. Augustine, in the confidential conversations wherein St. John and his friend could penetrate the mystery of the kingdom of heaven.[25]

That was already, on our Lord's part, a first mystery of election. "He first loved us!" St. John was one day to say. Marvellous advances, mysterious foresight, which are known to men resolved to seek God and to give themselves to him. In the midst of their ardent youth they will attain the blessed end of the absolute gift of himself. Jesus Christ will speak to them the words which made the disciples: "Come to my abode and see!" They will understand that the honor God does them is great. They will bend their heads under the weight of too holy a glory; and they will accept, tremblingly and lovingly, that crown of priesthood composed of thorns and of lilies, of holiness and of sacrifice, but which stains with blood the brow of men only for love of men and for the glory of God.

It was also already, on the part of St. John, a mystery of purity, of eager correspondence, of inviolable integrity, of sworn innocence; and virginity, which had already received in woman, through Mary, an almost divine consecration, was to receive in man and in the priest, through

[24] "And there was evening and morning one day."—*Gen.* i. 5.

[25] "Quam beatum diem duxerunt, quam beatam noctem! Quis est qui nobis dicat quæ audierint illi a Domino?"—*St. Aug.*: "Chrysostomus, Cyrillus, Theophylact. et Euthymius non obscure significant non tantum horas reliquas hujus diei, nempe duas, sed per totam noctem apud Jesum, ejus doctrinæ gustum capiendo mansisse."—Maldonat, *in Joan.*, cap. i. n. 216. And Bossuet, commenting admirably the entire sentence (*Elevation on the Mysteries*, 24th week, 4th elevat.): "Happy day, happy night, passed with Jesus Christ in his mansion! Lord, where dwellest thou? Tell me where thou dwellest, that I may take up my abode thither. . . . I wish to attach myself to thee. 'Come, see, remain!' What sweet words! How sweet is it to know where Jesus dwells!"

St. John, a still more striking glorification. The Catholic Church has made it the special virtue of the priesthood. "Incorruption," says the Book of Wisdom, "bringeth near to God."[26] It is therefore by it that daily the priest and the divine Lamb can meet at the hour of sacrifice, can walk along the same rivers of purifying grace, can lie under the same roof, can sit at the same table, and be separated neither day nor night. It is likewise the primary condition of our strength; and if the priesthood still holds in its hands the promises of life, it is to those energies of continent grace that it will owe its greatest conquests. "Oh! how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory: for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and with men. It triumpheth crowned for ever, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts."[27]

Such was the commencement of the mission of Jesus. St. John remembered it in his latest years. As we are told by St. Irenæus, who belonged to his school, and almost to his time: "All the elders," says he, "who in Asia grouped themselves around St. John, the disciple of the Lord, attest that he related that Jesus manifested himself and taught men at the age of thirty years. Some have learned it not only from John himself, but from the other disciples, who bear testimony to it. To whom, then, should we here give preference? To such witnesses, or to Ptolemy, who never saw the apostles, and who never, even in dreams, walked in the footsteps of any one of them?"[28]

We must have great regard to this first page of the history of St. John. It throws light upon the others; it

[26] Wisdom vi. 20.

[27] Wisdom iv. 1, 2.

[28] "Quam habens ætatem triginta annorum Dominus noster docebat, sicut evangelium et omnes seniores testantur, qui in Asia apud Joannem discipulum Domini convenerunt, id ipsum tradidisse Joannem"—Πάντες οἱ *πρεσβύτεροι μαρτυροῦσι, οἱ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν Ἰωάννῃ τῷ τοῦ κύριον μαθητῇ συμβεβληκότες, παραδεδωκέναι ταῦτα τὸν Ἰωάννην.*—St. Irenæus, *Adv. Haer.*, lib. ii. cap. xx. p. 148, edit. Massuet, Paris, 1772.

reveals the disciple, it announces the apostle, it prepares the Evangelist; it binds one to the other by subordinating them, the school of the prophet and that of the Son of God. It will later explain wherefore John chose to open his Gospel by the testimony of his Master; from that special dwelling upon those commencements we shall recognize the disciple of the shore of Bethany. And whether he speak of Jesus or whether he speak of John the Baptist, the authority of the historian will be unexceptionable, for he will begin by following that great man ere becoming, at his instigation, the apostle of that great God.

CHAPTER II.

VOCATION OF ST. JOHN.

I.

A FEW miles beyond the village of Nazareth, upon a slight elevation overlooking the Lake of Tiberias, travellers notice a long line of ruins parallel with the shore. Huge blocks of lava and of rubble-stone seem, by their arrangement, to testify to the remains of an ancient city. Two rather larger ruins emerge from the wreck. One is an edifice of small dimensions situated near the coast, with columns, pilasters, and fragments of sculpture more antique than its walls. The other is a monument of great extent, of which nothing remains save the crumbling walls, but covered with beautiful remnants of Corinthian capitals and of friezes lying in confusion and partly hidden in the grass.

The spot containing these noble ruins is desolate and uninhabited. The lake plashes its waters sadly against the stones heaped together or scattered along the shore. Only one magnificent duplicate column of syenite, perfectly preserved with its entablature, rises towards heaven.

That is all which remains of the birthplace of St. John and of St. James. Its very name of Bethsaida is lost to it. The Turks know the place only under the name of Tell-Houm or Tell-Hum. The duplicate column alone is left standing, as if to mark by a sign the cradle of the two

brothers, inseparably united in the faith and in the apostolate of Jesus.[1]

It would be exceedingly difficult for the historian to reconstruct the Galilean city by the aid merely of these remains, but they render it easier to determine the site with accuracy. Situated upon the most northern gulf of the Sea of Galilee, rather to the west, Beth-Tsaida overlooked the two great points of view of which God has made the image of the infinite—the mountains and the waters. The mountains formed, from the summits of Gilboa to the first ascents of Libanus, a vast amphitheatre, opening hither and thither to show more of the sky. The lake, which is but twelve miles in circumference, is at the foot of these hills. Its celebrated waters formerly washed against Tiberias, Corozain, and Capharnaum (or Capernaum, as it is now incorrectly written), all the historic names which awaken thought, and all the blessed names which move the heart. Ten cities were scattered along that shore—those which the ancients styled the Decapolis. Finally, as a background to that grand picture, on the east the desert extended itself into Iturea, Abiglene, and Trachonitis; on the south, the Jordan flowed forth from the lake to descend into the valley of Hinnom; to the west, the plain of Esdrelon and Mount Tabor, upon which every evening the sun reposes and disappears. Such is the framing of that picture. A magnificence of a more elevated order was at that time reserved for that land which God was about to consecrate by his immortal footsteps, and wherein his great Evangelist had just been born.[2]

[1] De Saulcy, *Travels about the Dead Sea and throughout the Biblical Lands*, vol. ii. p. 502: "I unhesitatingly maintain the identity of Beth-Saida-Julias with the Bethsaida of the Gospels, and that of the latter with the ruins of Tell-Houm."

[2] The Gospel does not mention the birthplace of St. John; but tradition invariably fixes it at Bethsaida. We cite: St. Chrysostom, *in Joan. Homil.*,

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

Josephus, the historian, informs us that Philip, Tetrarch of Galilee, had so enlarged that village that it might easily pass for a city.[3] By the utterly profane character of those embellishments he sought to accommodate it to the customs of nations; and, that it might retain naught of its Jewish origin, the courtier-prince had conferred upon it the name of Julias, in honor of Julia, grand-daughter to Augustus.[4] Thus transformed, situated upon the great road between Syria and Egypt, Bethsaida had gradually become influenced by Roman contagion. The wealthy, in very large numbers, had their villas there, the toll-gatherers their offices; it was a rendezvous of business and of pleasure. But, overlooked by that floating and debased multitude, a primitive, austere, and laborious people energetically protested against the new ideas and the new manners. That population was principally recruited amid the lake fishermen, whose lives were passed further from men and nearer to God.

It was from among those men of toil and of faith that God deigned to select a family of apostles.

The head of that family was named Zabdai, which we have translated by the name of Zebedee.[5] Some writers have maintained that Zebedee was related to Joseph, the

t. viii. p. 31: "Hic illiteratus, rudis, ex Bethsaidâ, Zebedæi filius." Theodoret, *Comm. in Psalm.* lxvii., edit. Sirmund, t. i. p. 659: "Petrus autem et Andreas, et Jacobus, et Joannes, et Philippus, ex vico Bethsaidæ fuerunt."

[3] The Greek text has Βηθσαϊδάν. This latter form gives us the signification of that name, in which we must seek the two words—*Beit*, house, and *Saidoun*, fishing. Bethsaida, therefore, had received its name from the trade of its inhabitants. It was a city, since St. John (John i. 45) and St. Luke (Luke ix. 10) give it the title of Πόλις. However, St. Mark (Mark viii. 23) styles it simply village, ἔξω τῆς κώμης. St. Epiphanius (*Adv. Hæres.*, lib. ii. p. 437) tells us that Capharnaum and Bethsaida were two *cities* at a little distance from each other. (See De Saulcy, *Travels in Biblical Lands*, vol. ii. p. 510.)

[4] Joseph., *Jewish Antiquities*, bk. xviii., iii., n. 762.

[5] From the word Zabdai the Greeks have formed Ζεβεδαίος, which we have translated by Zebedee. That name is found in the Second Book of Esdras.

adopted father of the Lord.[6] That is merely a supposition, for which one would vainly seek a foundation; and, beyond what the Gospel has said concerning him, it is not requisite to seek too anxiously for a history and a pedigree for the father of the apostles.

Zabdai was a fisherman. We must keep ever in our minds that amongst the Jews that trade was held in high honor. The national customs and the rabbinical teachings made manual labor a duty for all, in which the great and the learned of that race did not disdain to employ themselves.[7]

The Gospel furnishes details regarding the fisherman and his fishing which enable us specially to understand him. Zebedee owned a bark upon the lake. He was its master. Sometimes he associated himself with a family of men of his trade, whose chief was Jona, father of Simon and of Andrew.[8] It appears that at that time there was great intimacy between those two families, whom the apostolate was thenceforth to render inseparable. At other times Zebedee hired mercenaries, and made them labor in his behalf.[9]

It is by reason of that circumstance, and by some others analogous, that the attentive students of the Gospel have supposed that family of fishermen to have been in the enjoyment of a moderate competency.[10] Be that as it may,

[6] Pseudo-Julianus, *in Adversariis*, No. 60: "Zebedæus pater Joannis et Jacobi, erat frater Cleophæ et Josephi sponsi genitricis Dei" (apud Bolland., XXVa die Julii, in festo S. Jacobi Majoris).

[7] The ancient rabbins, such as Scemahia and Althalio, declare that all the learned should understand some manual trade, *quo victum quærerent*. Rabbi Gamaliel, in his book styled *Haod*, likewise ordains it. The illustrious Rabbi Jochanna learned the trade of a tailor; the Master Juda was a fisherman. Such was the law and the custom in the ancient East (See *Baron. Annal.* t. i. p. 406.)

[8] Luke v. 10.

[9] Mark i. 20.

[10] The following reasons give a pretended weight to that opinion. The mother of John was amongst the number of holy women who provided for the wants of the Lord and of his apostles. She bought aromatic herbs and

their labor was their greatest source of wealth. God does not seek fortune in those whom he deigns to appoint to the prerogative of his apostolate. Undoubtedly he excludes neither the wealthy nor the great; but generally his predilections are elsewhere.[11] And if there be anywhere, in the humble hut of some laborer, at the corner of some street, in some village hidden behind a mountain, or in the depth of a wood, some modest fireside guarded by honesty and by decency, thence it is by preference that God will deign to select the darling of his flock, to pour over his head the sacred unction which will consecrate him prophet and king of souls.

Two sons of Zebedee exercised the trade of fishermen under his direction, passing the night upon the lake, laboring vigorously, sometimes enduring dangerous tempests, and in the daytime landing together upon the shore in order to deposit their fish and to mend their nets.

They were named James and John, as we are aware. James was the elder, and he is designated by the title of James the Greater, in order to distinguish him from another James, the son of Alpheus, who was surnamed the Just. John is the disciple whom we have seen at the school of the Precursor, and whom the Saviour had already attracted to himself upon the banks of the Jordan. That name of John, or of Johanan, in the Hebrew tongue, signified divine grace, benevolence, and beauty—a predestined name which no one was to bear

spices for the burial of Jesus. John himself was known to the high-priest, and the Gospel tells us that he took Mary, his adopted mother, to his own house and his own possessions, εἰς τὰ ἴδια. Origen seems to place James and John somewhat above Peter and Andrew. The latter are only fishermen, ἁλιεῖς. The sons of Zebedee are master-boatmen, ναύτας.

[11] Concil. Trid (Sess. XXIII., De Reformat.): "Pauperum filios præ cæpue eligi vult ad sacerdotium."

with more honor than he whose history I have undertaken to relate.[12]

What mental cultivation had St. John received? A disciple of the law, and frequenting the Synagogue, where the rabbi read and expounded it to the people, his religious instruction was that common to the Jews. However, John the Baptist had been for him in divine questions "a burning and a shining light," as Jesus Christ himself was to style the prophet of the wilderness.[13] But, on the other hand, had the great apostle learned the first elements of human knowledge? The Gospel is precise. He was, according to St. Luke, "an illiterate and ignorant man."[14] In that portion of the Acts his sudden eloquence, like that of Peter, can only be explained by a miracle to the eyes of the Pharisees assembled to pass judgment upon them. St. Chrysostom requires us to understand literally that passage of the Scripture; St. Basil, St. Hilary, and St. Peter Chrysologus are of the same opinion; and the texts of the fathers, unanimous upon that point, furnish us with the testimony that all human learning was utterly wanting to the first hearer and to the future reporter of the eloquence of Jesus.

The language of the Galilean was the Syro-Chaldaic,

[12] Joannes sive hebraice *Iochannan*, a gratia nomen habet a radice, *chanan*, quæ nihil aliud est quam charitas Dei diffusa in cordibus nostris.

[13] John v. 35.

[14] Acts iv. 13. It is upon the authority of this text that St. Chrysostom goes so far as to declare that John was an utter ignoramus, and knew not how to read or write (*Homil.* i. *in Joan*). It is true that this same father says in another part of his writings that he intentionally takes pleasure in depreciating the learning of the apostles, in order to render more striking the miracle of their preaching and the divinity of their mission in the world (*Homil.* iii. n. 4, in Ep. i. ad Corinth., t. x. 20). Item S. Basil. *in Regulis fusius disputatis*, regu'a 8, t. ii., page 545. Origen., *in Celsum*, lib. i. p. 48. S. Hilar., *De Trinitate*, lib. ii. p. 10. John Lami, in his learned treatise *De Eruditione Apostolorum* (Florence, 1778, in 8vo), has made a curious gathering of the passages from the fathers, wherein the want of all human learning is recognized in very energetic terms.

which had prevailed throughout Palestine since the days of the Captivity. However, the Greek tongue had become so much in use in "Galilee of the nations" that the apostle could at that time both understand it and speak it. It was not the Greek of the learned schools, full of art and of exquisite shades, such as it was cultivated at Athens and at Alexandria. It was the "common" tongue, as it was styled—that Greek "savoring of barbarism," simpler, more popular, a curious mixture of local sayings and of foreign forms; a singular compound of Hebrew force and of Hellenic grace, which one day, permeated by the breath of God, will become a new language—the language of the Gospel. It had previously been that of St. John.[15]

We must now enquire who was the mother of the disciple, and what manner of woman had the honor of forming the heart of the man whom the mother of God himself was to receive as her son.

Amid the women of Galilee who were close followers of the Lord Jesus, the Gospel names Salome, and it is she whom it assigns as mother to the great apostle.[16] Are we to credit the opinion which makes Salome a relative, and even a sister, of Mary?[17] The Holy Gospel teaches us

[15] Consult, upon the language of the New Testament and of St. John, Berger de Xivrey, *Essay upon the Text and the Style of the New Testament.*

[16] The following is deduced from comparing of texts: St. Matthew and St. Mark speak of three women present at the visit to the Holy Sepulchre. Of these three women St. Matthew names two—that is, Mary Magdalen and Mary, mother of James the Just. The third he designates under the title of the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Matt. xxvii. 56). This third woman, mother of James and of John, is styled by St. Mark Salome (Mark xvi. 1). See Origen., *in Matth. Tract.* xxxv., in finem.

[17] Adricomius sustains that Salome was sister to Mary. Eckius declares that the contrary opinion is opposed to the stream of tradition. St. Bridget styles St. John *Sororium Christi.* St. Bernard, in his lament of the Blessed Virgin, makes our Lord say from the top of his cross: "Interim Joannes, qui est *nepos tuus*, reputabitur filius tuus, curam habebit tui, et erit solatium tibi." But Bellarmin greatly questions the authenticity of that document. See also Cornelius à Lapide on this point, *in Matth.*, 4to edition, page 337.

nothing regarding it. We perceive thereby that at least their souls were indeed of the same family, and two passages of the sacred books show profoundly the varied physiognomy of that woman. When she appears before us the first time, she is still the Jewish mother, such as nature formed her—ambitious through love, all eager for her children, framing for them thoughts and designs of glory, soliciting for them a double place of honor near the King of Israel. She later reappears at the foot of the cross of her God; but at that final hour she is already a Christian mother. She has realized that the true throne of that King of Sorrows is a bloody cross. She sees John, her son, the nearest to Jesus, in the first place, which she had coveted for him. She has even courageously climbed Calvary, and she stands there until the end beside the apostle, sympathizing with him, encouraging herself by him; like him, maintaining to Jesus the most generous fidelity of all—that which survives death, and which remains to pray beside the tomb.

Thus lowly birth, a village for country, a tradesman for father, a generous but obscure woman for mother, his profession for science, for fortune a bark—such is nature's share in the existence which we are about to trace. God requires no more to complete his work, and it is from that nothingness that he will produce a marvel of beauty such as he, the God of angels, will find worthy of his entire complacency.

II.

Some events are grouped between the mysterious election of St. John and his vocation to the apostolate of Jesus. The other evangelists had not transcribed them.

John it is who relates them. He could not omit them, for they belong to his history as well as that of his Master.

It is into his native Galilee that the historian at once transports us. But from that Galilee to the coast of Bethany, where we have just seen him, the distance is short, and the news of the meeting which the fishermen have had upon the banks of the Jordan hastily spread along the populous shore of the Lake of Genesareth. Andrew, the companion of John in the happy day passed with Jesus, cannot keep it secret; and scarcely has he returned home when, meeting Simon, "We have found the MESSIAS," he said to him full of joy. Then he brought his brother to that Divine Master.[18]

The next day it is Philip, like those of Bethsaida, whom the Lord accosts and induces to follow him. Once conquered, Philip himself, in his turn, meets his friend Nathanael. He was probably the same with Bartholomew, the son of Tholmai, or the son of Ptolemy, according to the custom of the Jews in those days who assumed Greek names. Philip informs him that he had just encountered "Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." Nathanael hesitates: "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?" But Jesus had perceived that good Israelite whilst the latter was still under the fig-tree. He recalls to him the hour, the circumstance, and possibly the secrets. He subjugates him by love no less than by light, and the conquered disciple adores in him "his Master, the Son of God, and the King promised to Israel."[19]

Such is the account given by St. John; such are the souvenirs of his early life, the story of its commencement, the history of his town, of his lake, and of his brethren, related by himself. A thousand personal details, private

[18] John i. 41. [19] John i. 49.

allusions, unintentional words, a picturesque simplicity, a really inimitable accent of truth, casts over it that interest and that charm of sincerity which the presence of the witness gives to intimate memories. It has likewise the interest and the charm of the original. It is not the still public and victorious life. These men are disciples, are becoming apostles. Other historians have related their vocation. John recalls their conversion.[20] He stations us beside the very cradle of Christianity, because he was there himself. It is from him, it is from Andrew, it is primarily from Bethany, then from Bethsaida, that burst forth those luminous news which were quickly to reach all the shores of the world and of eternity.

The first reunion of those disciples of Jesus, the primary revelation which he gives them of his glory, is of the same epoch, as also of the same character and related by the same historian. Nathanael, to whom Jesus had just manifested himself, was not of the town of John. He inhabited the village of Cana, the modern Kefr-Kenna, about three Roman miles from Nazareth, and a short distance also from Bethsaida.[21] In a family of that land, possibly in his own, as some writers have imagined, a wedding was being celebrated, to which they invited Jesus, his mother, and the fishermen who were his disciples. These latter were as yet only six in number, all of the same place, all of humble condition in life—a small band of intimates, containing within themselves the germ of the universality of the Christian Church. It is not at all likely, as some authors

[20] These observations dispel all contradiction between the fourth Gospel and the synoptics, who relate to us in a very different manner the vocation of the apostles (Matt. x. 1–11; Mark iii. 13–19; Luke vi. 12–16). The synoptics occupy themselves merely with the final vocation. For John the great day is that on which he for the first time saw Jesus. These disciples were to resume their usual occupations for a short space of time ere their summons to the apostolate.

[21] See De Saulcy, *Travels in Biblical Lands*, vol. ii. p. 452.

pretend, that St. John was the spouse of that miraculous marriage-feast, from which the Divine Master must have summoned him to the honor of virginity. A sentence of St. Augustine, wrongly interpreted by Bede, can alone have given rise to that singular idea;[22] and the history of St. John is in itself sufficiently beautiful not to require the addition of a page of romance.

To justify the circumstantial features of his account of these espousals it is not at all necessary that the faithful Evangelist should have been the husband; but it suffices, as everything here indicates, that he was the invited guest.

It is the second page of his *Souvenirs*, as the ancient fathers style the Gospels.[23] It is the second preparatory meeting of Jesus with his humble ministers, quite unconscious as yet of the work under preparation. Nothing striking, no discourse, no noisy manifestation after the manner of men. A family repast inaugurates the new reign, as a farewell feast was to crown it. Jesus began by changing water into wine, as one day John will see him change wine into his blood. But already, says Bossuet, commenting St. Augustine, it is the changing of the tasteless water of the Old Law into that evangelical wine which is to inebriate souls in the divine nuptials.[24] Behold those souls begin to burn towards him. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee," says St. John:

[22] St. Augustine had said: "Joannem Dominus de fluctivaga nuptiarum tempestate vocavit." Cornelius à Lapide explains it: "Intellige nuptiarum non initarum, sed ineundarum, seu quas inire potuissent."—*In Joan.* c. ii. 2, p. 277. Bede, not understanding, has constructed this fable: "Dominus vocavit Joannem de nuptiis, et ipse reliquit conjugem et secutus est eum. Et propter hoc amavit eum Jesus plus omnibus discipulis, quia traxit eum de amore mulieris, et castus permansit."—*Varii Serm.*, p. 353; De S. Joanne Evangel.

[23] St Justin *Apolog.*, passim. Απομνημονεύματα τῶν Αποστόλων.

[24] Bossuet, *Sermon for the Second Sunday after Epiphany*, 1st point.

"and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him." [25]

There ends the private life of Jesus of Nazareth. There also terminates the account of that preparation in the Gospel of St. John.

The time had come to organize the conquest. Had Jesus consulted but the simplest rudiment of worldly prudence, he would have remembered either the kings who had bowed before his manger or the wise men whom he had astonished in the temple, and he, who had but to speak to his Father and legions of angels would descend from heaven, would not have sought his fellow-laborers upon the barks of fishermen. The work would then have been one of human wisdom, but it would not have been one of infinite tenderness and of divine strength. Therefore it is that the Lord remembers only the simple, the poor, and the humble. He specially remembers those who had loved him. Leaving, then, behind him palaces and schools, he descended upon the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

"Jesus, passing by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon, afterwards surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea, for they were fishermen.

"And he said to them: Come after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." [26]

In the order of summons to his apostolate, and in the choice which he makes of the princes of his Church, it is to the bark of Peter that Jesus first bends his steps. That done, and the rank of supremacy fixed from the first day, Jesus returns to John.

"And going on from thence a little farther, he saw two other brothers: James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship.

"And forthwith he called them. And leaving their

[25] John ii. 11. [26] Mark i. 16, 17.

father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed him." [27]

John quitted his nets: *relictis retibus.* That was the law, the example, and the consecration of the spirit of renunciation and of poverty in the future Church. Ancient society had frequently beheld the same man at once priest, prince of the people, governor of the state, and even general of the army. Such will not be the spirit of the new priesthood; and it is not enough that, by a preliminary movement, the apostle has elevated himself from earth by virginity, if by a second flight he does not raise himself above the lower region wherein the crowd seeks its prey of pride and of riches. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Why take ye thought for your food or for your raiment? I sent ye forth without scrip, without a tunic, and without money: did ye want for any of those things? Consider the lilies of the fields, consider the birds of the air. . . ." Thus, pure as the lily and free as the bird, a society was springing into life, which, taking nothing from this world, was to reign over the earth whilst hovering above it. *Excelsior cœlis*—Higher than the heavens. That is the definition of the priest in St. Paul. Thus did God will it, thus did men demand it; thus raised above earth, that man, disengaged from all things, will draw all to himself. St. Bernard knew it well. "Poverty," said he, "is like a great wing which bears us rapidly towards the kingdom of heaven." [28] It is the law of liberty, it is the law of dignity, it is the law of conquest: *relictis retibus.* Oh! when, then, shall we have quitted all our nets?

The Evangelist adds that John left his father: *relicto patre.* That is the second surrender, that of the family, and it is the most heart-rending. To dedicate one's life

[27] Mark i. 19, 20; Matt. iv. 21, 22.
[28] S. Bern., *Sermo* IV. *de Adventu.*

to the task of consoling all the world, without keeping near one a being to console one, to second, to assist one; to renounce one's own family after having already relinquished the right of giving one's self another; and thus to journey onward, through a lonely old age, to a foreign tomb which has not received the bones of our ancestors: the new Apostolate required that sacrifice: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me."[29] It was no longer the odious priesthood of the East, the inheritance of a race, handed down in a family, planting its immovable castes in the soil. It is social ministry, it is the service of the man detached from his own family as he is from himself. To quit all, to sever from all, to immolate all to God. There is all that, and still more beside, in that *relicto patre*, which would be a barbarous word did not the Gospel immediately add the divine word: *Relicto patre, secuti sunt Jesum.*

There remain to us, therefore, Jesus, souls, and heaven. The Church knew it well. She knew that at the word of heroic renunciation, "Behold, Lord, we have left all things, and have followed thee," she could answer without deceiving one single heart: "Whoever shall have left home, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the Gospel, shall receive a hundred times as much, now in this time; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, it is true, but also in the world to come life everlasting."[30] She could, therefore, without disquietude—I might say, without scruple and without remorse—demand of her ministers a renouncement which she felt herself so fully capable of recompensing.

Behold the election, behold the vocation.

[29] Matt. x. 37. [30] Mark x. 28-30.

Primarily, on the part of God, a distant preparation, that of the family, of the country, and of the school of his predestined disciple. Then a first merciful advance, a question addressed to our liberty, and submitted to our consent; a prudent waiting, a delay for trial; then, the choice made, the hour come, a decisive summons which severs all ties.

Secondarily, on the part of man, a virtuous and religious disposition, an inclination towards all that is pure and beautiful, a jealous vigilance over those treasures; for that end, the solitude and silence of the desert; the hidden apprenticeship of interior struggles, and the baptism of penance; then, a profound attention to Jesus Christ, who passes by; the ear open to every voice which names him, fidelity in following him, a love for his house, the desire of remaining thither some time in his company. Finally, generosity, courageous awaiting of his orders, do they what they may; and, at his slightest word, renunciation of everything, to belong to him alone. Of how many souls all this was to become the history, and what a reign Jesus Christ would inaugurate among men!

CHAPTER III.

ST. JOHN THE DISCIPLE OF CHARITY.

I.

JESUS, having chosen and called John and James, kept them about his person. He began at first to walk with them around the lake wherein they were accustomed to fish. Salome would not be separated from her sons. We find her, in company with some faithful women of Galilee, following the footseps of Jesus, providing, like them, for the subsistence of the Master, and hearing his lessons with the two apostles her children.[1]

However, Jesus Christ seemed less occupied in performing by his own power the conquest of souls than in preparing the twelve to gather in the harvest of which he himself said that he sowed the seed. He fully promised them to send them one day to teach all nations; but it was quickly visible that for him the Gospel was principally the work of their formation in the spirit of charity, and of their initiation into the great truths of the kingdom of heaven.

Thus there was the public school of Jesus, and there was likewise his familiar school.

[1] "Magna laus mu ieris quæ ipsa reliquerat virum suum, et secuta fuerat Christum; qu'a ille sine ista vivere poterat, ista autem sine Christo salva esse non poterat."—S. Chrysost., *in Matt.*, cap. xx. St. Chrysostom supposes, a little further on, that Salome did not begin to follow after the footsteps of Jesus Christ until after the death of her husband Zebedee, making of our Lord the staff of her old age: "Quia fides nunquam senescit et rel g'o fatigationem non sentit."—*In Catena aurea*, p. 216.

The public school was that which the Master opened to the crowd, upon the strand of lakes, upon the sides of the Galilean hills, in the vast desert, or under the immense galleries of the temple of Jerusalem. The familiar school of Jesus had not that noise and renown. Darkness descends, evening comes, the crowd, healed and blessed, return to their respective villages, the Master remains alone with his disciples. "Master," these latter say to him, "explain to us that parable." Jesus opens his lips: no more veils, no more imagery. It is pure and clear truth which flows from its source. "Behold now, Master, thou speakest plainly. Now we know that thou knowest all things. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God." [2] Such was the familiar school of the Master of Truth.

The school of charity was still more private. Here there are no longer thousands of men whom the Lord feeds upon the top of a mountain. There are no longer the blind nor the lepers whom he heals along the wayside, to the stupefaction of the multitude, nor the bier of a child which he suddenly causes to halt in the solemnity of a funeral procession. But it is a father who timidly approaches to beg Jesus to come into his house, where some one was about to die. It is a man who fears to expose to public gaze his epileptic son; a poor woman who cannot, by reason of her fever, be brought to her heavenly Physician. Then Jesus dismissed the crowd. The Apostles themselves are not always admitted to the privilege of witnessing the miracle. Some few, three amongst them, the best, and undoubtedly also the most beloved, are alone initiated into the merciful secret of that benefit. That was the familiar school of charity.

In the bosom of that intimacy there is a special place for

[2] John xvi. 29, 30.

the Apostle St. John. In the holy Gospel two figures predominate and detach themselves from the rest by the prominence of their saintly originality. They are St. Peter and St. John. They will become in the Church the types of the two powers of the spiritual kingdom—doctrine and love. And in like manner as Simon Peter, called the first to the work, was to become its head, John was destined to represent its heart. He is not merely the disciple of that school, he is the *beloved disciple*, according to the name which he gives himself in the Gospel; and the Lord, who sought first to make of him the apostle of charity, frequently separated him from the crowd, and even from his brethren, to offer him thereof, in the miracles of his life, privileged lessons and eloquent examples.

It was in these moments of confidence, carefully specified in the Gospel recital, that the neophyte learned the work of charity.

Thus he completed his education at the school of Jesus by a gradation which is carried out in the facts themselves in sacred history. And if the training of the smallest child accomplished by the hand of man be already a thing so excellent, I know not if there exist a more fitting subject of contemplation than God himself applying himself to the fashioning of his apostle, forming him in love, carving him in the marble of virginity, then animating him with his breath, warming him upon his bosom, and gradually elevating him to that divine resemblance which profane antiquity herself had made her ideal of perfection.[3]

It was in the first year of the public life of Jesus. He was near the lake when a man came to him. He was named Jairus, and he was the *prostates* or chief of that synagogue of Capharnaum which had just received the mani-

[3] "Ad similitudinem Deo proprius accedit humana virtus quam figura." —Cicer., *de Nat. Deor.* i. 84. *Item*, Plato, *Theætet.*, cap. xxv.

festo of his mission. Jairus cast himself as a suppliant at the feet of the Saviour. He is a father, his daughter is dying, and she is a child of only twelve years of age!

We know what Jesus did. The miracle which he proposes to perform will not be for the crowd. Some few privileged disciples will alone have the spectacle and the lesson. And as there are three among that band destined for the Apostolate who more specially represent its virtues, Peter, James, and John, the beloved disciple, are those invited by Jesus to accompany him to the bedside of the dying girl.[4]

On the road thither they learned that she had just died. The sounds of funeral music already issued from the house, and they hurriedly informed the Divine Physician that he need come no further, as it was too late. But the hour of hopelessness is the hour of God. We therefore behold him approach the bed of the innocent victim. On one side the weeping parents of the young girl, on the other Jesus Christ with his three apostles; all the powers of heaven, all the tenderness of earth, bend over the child. "She is not dead, but sleepeth!" John hears his Master pronounce these words of immortality which Jesus was to repeat beside the tomb of Lazarus. He sees him take the hand of the deceased. "Young girl, arise!" She rises, she walks, she eats. The Lord has restored her to her father, and the Apostle can understand for what teaching his Master had thus admitted him to be the witness of the miracle.

The special lesson resulting thence is that the Apostolate was primarily a mission of benevolence.

The primordial conception of the Christian religion is that of the divine institution of charity. The Gospel has therefore to be first a help, a cure, a consolation, in order

[4] Mark v. 37.

to be enabled to become a sermon. That was the first step in the apostolic initiation of St. John; and, wishing to make of him a Christian and a priest, the God consecrator did not conduct him to academies and to porticos; he led him to his chosen school—the bedside of a sick child.

The Church loves the sick. She who was betowed upon the world for the cure of souls has for our body and its infirmities a compassion equal to her respect. She has a sacrament whose grace is to cure and to strengthen. She has constructed palaces for those who are wounded and for those who are worn out by labor or exhausted by old age. She has created for them a service of devotion, of consecrated tenderness, and of virginal love. Jesus wills, therefore, that the Apostle should first go to them. And when the man most prepossessed in favor of atheism, of positivism, and of materialism, laid upon a bed of sickness, and perhaps of death, shall behold the Saviour come to him, holding out to him his hand, blasphemy will cease and doubts will vanish. Suffering having begun the purification of the soul, charity will do the rest, because, according to the sublime definition of St. John, "God is charity."

The Church loves children. Again it is by them that the Apostolate commences, that its grace penetrates. Antiquity likewise pretended to cherish them, and under that old pagan reign of nature and of art what they saw in them was the grace of their appearance, the ingenuousness of their lips, the purity of their look—all those early charms which are peculiar to childhood and pass away with its bloom. But what man, what sage, what literature thought it possible to experience a sacred and deep sentiment for that crowd of wretched beings who were to the city at most a hope, for some a toy, for many a prey? Jesus was the first Master of a new and holy love. Allow-

ing them to approach him, he not only embraced them, he blessed them, he consecrated them beings not only in time, but beings for eternity. *Talium est enim regnum cœlorum.* They were sovereigns. He declared that his angels had the mission of being their representatives before God in heaven. He had just introduced the Christian Apostolate beside them on the earth, in order that it might cure them, that it might resuscitate them, that it might cause them to rise up, like the daughter of Jairus, that it might give them to eat at a Divine table, that it might restore them to their parents in grace and in life, and that, by that miracle daily renewed, they should recognize a Saviour and should adore a God.

II.

Having thus taught his great neophyte the work of charity and the primary object of his apostolate, Jesus had yet to reveal to him his spirit. This he did in three special circumstances, three moments of familiar confidence which are related to us by the Evangelists.

Magnanimity is essentially the spirit of charity. At first St. John did not possess it. Happy in the favor which surrounded his Master, proud likewise of the power which he had conferred upon the twelve, John did not understand the apostolate of well-doing beyond that circle,[5] and one day he thus manifested his thoughts.

Having seen some disciples who, not belonging to the apostolic family, however permitted themselves to drive out devils in the name of Jesus Christ, his heart took offence thereat as at a usurpation. "Master," said he to Jesus, "we

[5] "Joannes plurimum diligens et ideo redamatus plurimum excludendum putat beneficio eum qui non utatur obsequio."—St. Ambrose, *in Catena aurea*, p. 532; in Luc. ix.

saw a certain man casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us." "Hinder him not," replied the good Lord: "for he that is not against you is for you."[6]

Another day, St. Luke informs us, Jesus, boldly affronting the insults he foresaw were in reserve for him, quitted Capharnaum, and set out for the city of Jerusalem. It was probably after the second Passover, and the Saviour repaired to the Feast of Tabernacles, of which John himself speaks in a passage of his book. "Master," the brethren said to him, "pass from hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see thy works which thou doest, and begin to manifest thyself to the world."[7]

The occasion was excellent. Jews from every land filled the Holy City; the illuminations of the Acropolis of Sion, the choirs, the sacred dances, the cabins of foliage raised upon the terraced roofs, along the streets, and in the squares, recalled the forty years passed by the Hebrews under tents in the desert; and from all parts the faithful, bearing in their hands palm branches entwined with willow and with myrtle, flocked to thank God for the harvest just gathered, and to offer sacrifice for the salvation of their families and for the redemption of the nation.[8]

The shortest road to reach the Holy City was to cross the plain of Samaria; and we still discover thereon the traces of the ancient way which connected those two provinces of Palestine. But the Samaritans, a half-pagan tribe, partly composed of foreign colonies brought into that country through captivity, were enemies of the Jews.

That animosity had still further increased, since, under the government of Coponius, several years previously, a

[6] Luke ix. 49, 50. [7] John vii. 3, 4.

[8] Regarding the Feast of Tabernacles, see Döllinger, *Paganism and Judaism*, vol. iv.

troop of Samaritans had made a hurried incursion into Jerusalem, during the Feast of the Passover, and had profaned the sanctuary by casting in thither human bones. They evidently sought by that profanation to hinder the celebration of the great Jewish festival.[9]

The Lord, ever mindful of the law, sent two of his disciples to ask the right of way. One of them was St. John, the other was James, his brother. But the Samaritans shut their gates against them, and refused to allow Jesus to enter their province. Then James and John became excessively enraged; and calling to mind that formerly fifty-two servants of King Ochozias, sent out from Samaria to seize upon the prophet Elias, had been consumed by lightning, they returned, and said to Jesus: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"[10] "Jesus turned toward them," says the Gospel, and in tones of severe reproach, *increpavit eos*, made them this answer, eternally decisive against intolerance and against calling down fire in his defense: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save."[11]

What, then, was that spirit, thitherto ignored, which St. John was soon to possess in a more eminent degree than any other, and which was to become the apostolic spirit?

There was the ancient spirit, the pedagogic spirit of the schools of philosophy, the esoteric spirit of the old sanctuaries of Egypt, making of its wisdom a strict monopoly, and of which John but too well recalled the exclusive tendency when he said to the Master: "We forbade them to do good, because they followed not with us."

There was another, the Jewish spirit, a harsh, absolute, and repressive spirit, bestowing upon justice and upon truth their sanction in the world, arming itself with the

[9] Josephus, *Jewish Antiq.*, xviii., ii., 2. [10] Luke ix. 54. [11] *Ibid.*, 55, 56.

thunders of heaven, violently separating itself from all dissenters, and assuming to itself the vengeance of God in their regard: "Wilt thou not, Master, that we call down fire from heaven to consume them?"

According to the instructions given by Jesus Christ to St. John, the Christian spirit will be broader. It will be, in the first place, a spirit of wise condescension for those who sincerely seek for good, even when they perform it in concurrence with us or in a different manner from us. Undoubtedly, it is always necessary that truth be protected, and a connivance which would be an act of treason can only inspire us with horror. But, beyond that, the Church accepts every auxiliary, because concurrence can tend but to her profit. "Do not forbid them!" She seeks that which attracts, and not that which divides; she has learned from her Master that many sincere minds are everywhere to be met with, many books, many sciences, which, "not being against us, are with us by that very fact." Such is the profound answer of Jesus to St. John. And above the dust of that fiery arena wherein men yield themselves up to conflicts of opinion, are there not heights whereon those who love truth more than they love themselves, and who ask only to serve it, can meet in serene unity of doctrine and of charity?

Then, what St. John had just learned is that the Christian spirit is a spirit of gentleness. "Perfect virtue knows not vengeance," writes St. Ambrose. "There is no passion where reigns the fulness of charity. We must not repulse human infirmity, but must extend to it the hand. Indignation is far from the truly religious heart; and the desire of revenge does not enter into the magnanimous soul."[12] The Apostle does not call down fire upon the heads of the guilty, excepting the fire of Pentecost, that

[12] St. Ambrose (*in Catena aurea* S. Thomæ).

fire of the Holy Ghost, which John later was charged to bear personally to those Samaritans whom he had so detested.[13] Behold the Master. When that great Prince dictates his instructions to his ambassadors and to his lieutenants, he marks out in three words their duty: to give, to love, and to suffer. To love his enemies and his persecutors; to give his goods, his soul, his cloak, to the needy, his left cheek to him who has just struck the right one, his life for his executioners; to endure hunger, thirst, nakedness, and death. Such will be the manifesto of the Prince of Peace. "Peace be to this house!" The Apostle of the Gospel will have but that word upon his lips when he shall knock at the door of hearts. And if that door close against charity, there is but one species of retaliation permitted: that of gently shaking off the dust from his feet, of awaiting, of departing, or of seating himself upon the side of the hill, and of weeping over that blinded Jerusalem which knew not the day of the divine visitation.

III.

But Jesus held in reserve a final lesson for him whom he had made his disciple in the true spirit of charity.

It is incontestable that up to the time of the Passion the Apostles had formed a very gross idea of the kingdom of God, picturing it to themselves as the empire of a powerful earthly prince, extending its boundaries from one sea to the other; and it was that they styled the reconstitution of the kingdom of Israel. Vainly did Jesus repeat to them that his kingdom was not of this world, that he was doomed to endure the woes prophesied of the Man of Sor-

[13] "Nonnunquam amplius prodest clementia, tibi ad patientiam, lapso ad correctionem. Samaritani citius crediderunt a quibus hoc loco ignis arcetur." —St. Ambrose, *in Catena aurea.*

rows, and that his followers should only aspire to the arduous honor of bearing their cross after him. He was not understood, and in this the mind of John was slow to comprehend, like that of the others. It even appears that, being the friend of that great King, and the dearest to his heart, he had imagined to himself that he ought likewise to be nearest to his throne in that marvellous empire, hailed by all the hopes of the nation.

Such was at least the idea of Salome, his mother. As she formed part of the cortége of holy women who followed Jesus Christ, she profited of the time when the Lord descended from Galilee to repair to Jerusalem. It was the city of kings. She believed that the Lord was going thither finally to take possession of his throne.[14] The hour therefore, was urgent, and, approaching Jesus with James and John, that ambitious mother first made her request as follows:

"Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, thou wouldst do it for us." [15]

"What wilt thou?" said Jesus.

Then Salome, prostrating herself before him: "Command," she saith to him, "that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom." [16]

It was, in fact, the custom that in the Supreme Council of the Jewish nation, below the chief seat occupied by the *nasi*, a prince of the Sanhedrim, there were two places of honor, styled the place of the Father and the place of the Sage.

Hearing her solicit the honor of that precedency, Jesus

[14] "Putavit mulier Dominum esse regnaturum, et aviditate fœminea præsentia cupit, immemor futurorum"—St. Chrysost., *in Matt.* xx., *in Catena aurea*, p. 216.

[15] Mark x. 35.

[16] Matt. xx. 21.

clearly perceived that that mistaken mother misunderstood the nature of his reign.

"You know not what you ask," said he. "Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink? Can you be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?" [17]

That was offering his cross. The two brothers did not fully comprehend the sense of that saying. But, however, suspecting it to be an appeal to their generosity, "We can," they answered him.[18]

The Lord accepted their good-will, and, his divine look penetrating that distant day whereon James and John would suffer for his name, he refused not to promise them that glory, far superior to the earthly grandeur which they had coveted.[19]

"My chalice, indeed, you shall drink; and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized, you shall be baptized. But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father." [20]

The apostolic spirit had received its completion. To give to men was much. To pardon was better. But the fulness of charity was to forget one's self, to sacrifice one's self, and to endure. What a noble form Jesus Christ bestowed upon his priesthood! How he raised the sublime ideal step by step within the soul of his Apostle, and led him onward along the road of love! It was benevolent love; it was patient love; then love despoiled of itself; and, shortly after, love crucified.

[17] Matt. xx. 22; Mark x. 38. The Arab text has: "And be dyed in the bath wherewith I shall be baptized?" "Hæc tinctura fuit sanguinis qua purpuratus est Christus," says a father.

[18] "At illi, qui jam martyrii libertatem constantiamque retinebant, bibituros se pollicentur. Unde sequitur: Dicunt ei: Possumus."—St. Hilar., *Can.* xx.

[19] "Dominus eis prophetat magna bona, id est martyrio dignos efficiendos."—St. Chrysostom, *Homil.* lxvi. *in Matt.*

[20] Matt. xx. 23.

God exacts nothing less of John, his beloved disciple; and that which must be clearly understood in this our own day by those who solicit the honor of dwelling at the right or at the left hand of Jesus, is that the right hand of that God is a bloody hand nailed to a gibbet; that his left hand is that side pierced by the soldier, whence John saw flow forth blood and water. When God wishes to consecrate, to crown his Apostle, he does not ask him if he will know how to command, how to rule. But: "Can you drink of the chalice whereof I shall drink? Can you drink therefrom contempt, insult, and forgetfulness worse than persecution? Can you endure the pride of the princes of the people, the calumnies of the Scribes, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees? O my Apostle! O John! O my disciple! O young man! O son of charity! you whose youth is possibly cradled with sweet dreams of the future, can you learn to live patiently, humbly, and chastely, in the burning solitude of Patmos or in the corrupt atmosphere of pagan Ephesus?"

Oh! undoubtedly amongst those who wish to give God that testimony of love, there are some who know not what they ask—*Nescitis, quid petatis.* And who therefore, did they see the bottom of that abyss, would not tremble on casting therein their lives? But a word suffices, and in our ignorance of future things we know only that that chalice full of tears is the chalice of Jesus Christ—*Meum calicem.* We ask nothing more. By applying his lips the first to that draught, the divine Friend has sweetened its bitterness.[21] Then has he not blessed and consecrated another cup, which is his blood, his life, of which he causes us to drink daily, and which will soothe every pain upon his heart?

But God sought to crown his instructions to the disciple

[21] "Ipse Christus, tanquam pius et laudabilis medicus, prius bibit potionem quam parabat suis, id est passionem et mortem sustinuit, et sic sanitatem immortalitatis accepit, docens suos ut confidenter biberent potionem quæ generat sanitatem et vitam."—St Bernard, *Serm.* ii., ex parvis.

of charity by a final confidence which was to reveal to him its glory and its price.[22]

It was in the closing year of his mortal life. The Messiah was then returning from Cesarea Philippi, and was but a short distance from Nazareth, when, leaving the multitude of his disciples in the valley, he took with him but three from amongst them to witness a confidential manifestation. They were Peter, James, and John.[23] And he led them to the top of a mountain. A tradition, which dates, through St. Jerome, Eusebius, St. John Damascene, and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, as far back as the days of the Apostles, testifies that that summit was that of Tabor, situated ten miles to the east of Sephoris, about twenty miles from Cesarea Philippi.[24] It is still a noble mountain, rising solitary from the plain of Esdrelon, crowned with immense oaks and aerial verdure. Every evening the setting sun inundates it with mellow splendor, which has gained for it the sweet name of Tabor, signifying in Hebrew *bed of light.*

There it was that charity was fully manifested to the eyes of St. John. He heard a voice which descended from heaven—it was the revelation of charity dwelling in the very bosom of God: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He heard Jesus, Moses, and the prophet Elias conversing upon the approaching sufferings which Christ was to undergo in Jerusalem.[25] It was the revelation of the extreme charity which the Redeemer

[22] "Joannem assumpsit tamquam theologiæ purissimum organum, ut, visa gloria Filii Dei, quæ non subjacet tempori, insonet illud: In principio erat Verbum."—S. Joan. Damasc., *Orat de Transfig.*

[23] Luke ix. 28.

[24] Eusebius, *in Psalm* lxxvii. 13; S. Joannem Damasc., *in Psalm* lxxxviii.; S. Cyrill. Hieroso[illegible]mit., *Catech.* xi.; S. Hieronym., *Epist. ad Marcellam*, xvii.

[25] Luke ix. 31. "Dominus inducit Moysen et Eliam ut ostendat crucis gloriam ad consolandum Petrum et alios passionem timentes."—St. Chrysostom, *Homil.* lvii. *in Matth.*

was to manifest to the world. But already, whilst the colloquy prophesied its sorrows, the glory of the mountain showed its price. On one hand, all the past in Moses and Elias; on the other, all the future in Peter, James, and John prostrated before Jesus, thus evidencing that the ages belonged to that Lamb of God. The future victim, the centre of those two worlds, raised upon the mountain, "his face more brilliant than the rising sun, and his garments whiter than the early snow." It was a foretaste of the resurrection which pays every sacrifice. The intuitive vision allowed a slight glimpse of his unveiled beauty; and beatitude, suffering its first transports to flow into those souls, drew thence that cry which will be the thanksgiving of all eternity: "It is good for us to be here: let us make here three tabernacles!"

CHAPTER IV.

ST. JOHN THE FAITHFUL WITNESS OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

I.

IT was in Galilee that the Lord Jesus had offered to John the divine teachings which we have just mentioned.

However, Jesus Christ did not pretend to confine the field of his word to that one province. He descended into Judea, he sojourned at Bethany, he went to Jerusalem, where each yearly Passover every grand Jewish festival brought him to the temple. There opened for St. John a new school, in which his own recital permits us to follow him. John is specially the Evangelist of the life of Jesus in Judea. He was there the inseparable companion of his Master, at the same time the confidant of the divine revelations whereof his book has preserved the luminous impress; and if Galilee has shown us in him the disciple of charity, it is in Judea above all that he will appear to us as the contemplator of the Divinity.

It is here, at the same time, that we begin to have a closer realization of the Apostle, and that his presence betrays itself in everything which he relates. He is not merely the beloved disciple, as he so constantly repeats; he likewise styles himself the man of testimony: and this second name of St. John justifies itself no less exactly than the former. He may vainly have striven to conceal his identity under a discreet veil, throughout his whole history, a thousand minute details betray at every step the personal

remembrance of the faithful witness, whilst here and there the reflections which he makes expose his thought and argue his heart. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and which our hands have handled of the Word of Life, we declare unto you," he was one day to say. We must therefore study, by the light of his book, with what pious attention, with what affection, and with what penetration that witness saw into the life and into the doctrine of the Son of God made man. St. John will himself indicate his place and his action beside his Master.

Jesus reaches the city. According to John, he begins by instantly driving forth the sellers who violated the sanctity of the Temple. Armed with a scourge of cords, he assumes the character of avenger of the sacred rights of God. Had not Phineas performed the like act in former times? Jewish history, as well as their national customs, complete and justify the remembrances of John. Those merchants expelled by Jesus were those who sold victims to the people. Those oxen and those sheep were those to be immolated for the Paschal festival. Those doves were those which Israel offered for the ransom of their first-born. John names the money-changers. It was the law that, to pay the double drachma, it was necessary first to convert into Jewish coin the Gentile money bearing effigies interdicted within the Temple. Was that commerce, even under the sacred portico, in any way astonishing in an age which had so frequently witnessed the Pontificate itself put up at auction? Things here are therefore presented in their simple verity, and quite conformed to history. The Son of God himself likewise speaks truly as God. He promises an irrefragable sign of his power and of his holy mission: his resurrection. The ancient profane worship will be abrogated by him, and from his tomb will come forth the new religion

and the new sanctuary. Seeing that, the disciples recall to their minds the saying of the Prophet: "The zeal of thy house, O God, hath eaten me up." But who can know the thought of the disciples, save the disciple who himself had conceived, expressed, and heard that thought? Ocular testimony has already a noble form and an irrecusable zeal of sincerity in that first scene related by St. John.

But behold, by that striking evidence of his zeal, the young Master had afflicted a doctor of the law, who comes to seek Jesus. Who is he? John knows him, and names him Nicodemus. The Talmud also knows him, and gives him the same appellation. In Greek it is Nicodemos; in Hebrew it is Niqdam, or rather Bonaï, the son of Gorion, a wealthy personage of the city of Jerusalem, a follower of Jesus, and Jewish tradition here comes to confirm the narrative of the Apostle.[1] St. John sees in him one of the rulers of the nation: "Have not the rabbins since the time of Herod held the sceptre of opinion as well as of religion?" "There are three crowns," said the Rabbi Simeon: "the crown of the law, the crown of the pontiff, and that of royalty; but that of the rabbi is above that of the king."[2] Nicodemus dares not visit Jesus but at night, in order not to compromise his doctoral dignity in an interview with that Galilean. The Galilean was the type of provincial ignorance, and rabbinism looked upon him with supreme contempt. Jesus Christ speaks to the doctor of being born again of water and of the new spirit. That is the question of the day. Baptism was already conferred upon the proselytes. Water, in the Jewish cabala, has a number of symbolical qualities;[3] and the name of "men of the Spirit," the title of spiritual men, was that arrogated to themselves

[1] *Babyl., Sanhed.*, fol. 43, 1; *Talmud*, fol. 20; Sepp. *Life of Jesus.*

[2] *Pirkê Aboth*, or *Book of Principles*, in the *Talmud*, pp. 488, 511.

[3] See Le Hir, *The Three Heavenly Witnesses* (Relig. Essays, Oct., 1863.)

by those masters in Israel. The opposition prescribed between the flesh and the spirit entered equally into the known principles of schools of that time. Finally, allegorism was a system then most in favor, and Jesus Christ explains how the brazen serpent, raised in the desert to save the ancient people, is but the image of his redemption and of his exaltation. There, again, John knows all; he has penetrated all in the interview, the secret of which has been revealed to him. How has he been able to know it? That we shall learn later; but already we can perceive that the historian draws from the spring, because he himself dwells at the fountain-head.

That done, Jesus Christ returns into Galilee. John, the faithful companion of that itineracy, marks out its stations. They cross Samaria. That plain is arid, at least as far as Bethel, where it meets the sunny hills of Ephraim. Then it is three days' journey from Jerusalem to Sichem, the modern Nebulus or Naplouse. Thus the Son of Man "is wearied with his journey," as St. John observes.[4] The heat of the sun is intense under the sky of Syria; it is at the sixth hour, about midday, says the same witness, and Jesus Christ is parched with thirst. He seats himself near a source—it is the well of Jacob.[5] The Apocrypha name neither the time nor the spot where their fables take place, for that would be to expose themselves to be betrayed. True witnesses can specify, and they do so. That well is that which Jacob dug before Sichem, or Shechem, as it is likewise written, not far from the tomb of Joseph.

We find it there even now; the surrounding country has not changed since the sacred hour wherein, like indigent pilgrims whom we still meet in the same places returning from Nazareth, the Saviour of the world stopped thither

[4] John iv. 6. [5] John iv. 6.

to rest himself. The well is dried; but it is easy to sound its depth.

A woman descended thither, bearing her pitcher upon her head; that is an existant feature of Eastern manners. The Redeemer, who came to seek that which was lost, asked that woman for a drink. The latter cannot understand that condescension. Does not the Talmud forbid the Jew to eat bread with the Samaritan?[6] The apostles, who come up just then, are equally astonished that Jesus Christ lowers himself by that conversation.[7] Was it not the time when the hypocritical austerity of the rabbins led them to scruple to speak to a woman, whoever she might be? This latter speaks to the Prophet of the dissension which so widely divides Samaria and Jerusalem: Where ought men to worship—in the Temple of Sion, or upon Mount Garizim? What other question first presented itself to the minds of all? In the bosom of fertile fields waving with corn, opposite the well of Jacob, rose the two mountains of Hebal and of Garizim. The latter still preserves the ruins and the site of the Samaritan temple formerly built by Manasses to rival the sanctuary of Jerusalem. The question put by that woman to the Lord rose up, as it were, naturally before them. Finally, John perceives coming from the city its inhabitants, who hail the Prophet, and lead him in triumph within their walls. From the well of Jacob we can discern the flat roofs of the neighboring city which shine through the foliage of the olive-trees.

No page of that history better bears the stamp of reality. It is an historic site which furnishes the theatre and which explains it to the eye. The language which animates it is

[6] The *Talmud* has: "He who receives bread from a Samaritan is like him who eats swine's flesh." Grimm, *Die Samariter*, pp. 109, 110.

[7] John iv. 27.

truly the speech of a God. Jesus Christ prophesies the future adoration in spirit and in truth, and a poor woman, despised but sincere, receives the confidence of the glorious and sublime revolution which is preparing in the world. Here everything is divine on the lips of the Master; all is faithful in the remembrance of the disciple. That which elsewhere we believe, here we see, we feel, and we are near Jesus because we are with St. John.

However, the Saviour returns to Jerusalem, which city he soon astonishes by a succession of miracles, whereof the faithful and circumstantial memory is graven with all its details on the mind of the Apostle. It is at first the cure of a poor paralytic at the Probatic fountain, who was vainly awaiting the angel who was to descend and move the water to heal him.

That pool which John had seen, still has its remembrance in history, and can still be traced on the spot where it formerly existed. It was styled in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda—that is, House of Mercy. It was situated not far from the Sheep gate, now the gate of St. Stephen, and as the flocks were led thither to water the Greek name of Probatica had been bestowed upon it by reason of that destination.[8] It had five porches, observes the same witness. Nothing escapes St. John. It was, in fact, a vast circular portico, leading by a marble staircase into the basin. The water only possessed virtue when the angel moved it. May we not recognize in that intermission a certain analogy between that pool and the thermal waters which travellers speak of near Tiberias?[9]

Upon a marble bench are crowded a number of cripples. It is to the most abandoned and the poorest that Jesus

[8] From προβατον, sheep. See, regarding that pool, St. Jerome, Brocard, Benjamin, etc.

[9] See, regarding the angel of the pool, Maldonat, *in Joannem* v. col. 1,411.

immediately speaks. "Wilt thou be healed? Rise, take up thy bed, and walk," said our Lord, addressing him. The man was thirty-eight years of age. Again a precision of the attentive spectator. No detail is omitted in that scene of merciful power; for there was a vigilant look which has considered all, a faithful ear which has heard all, a heart which has retained everything—the look, the ear, and the heart of St. John.

Shortly after, Jesus healed the man born blind at the gate of the Temple. That is a great and memorable spectacle for St. John. He is with Jesus from the outset of that miraculous work; he hears the disciples conversing upon the mysterious origin of the evil—and is not he himself of the number of those disciples? He hears the Lord announce that his glory is about to manifest itself. In fact, it does manifest itself, and in what evidence, in what publicity! With what features of power and of goodness, with what thrilling and simple truth, the fact reappears in St. John!

That time his Master does not heal the mendicant by his word alone; he commands him to go to the reservoir of Siloe, to wash his eyes, which he had just moistened with a little clay mingled with his spittle.[10] There is not only a most exact circumstance: it is a moral lesson. The pool of Siloe was, in the ancient law, a symbol of grace, and ancient prophecy was pleased to oppose the silent flow of its waters to the disorderly torrent, image of the wandering power of the pagans: "Forasmuch as my people have cast away the waters of Siloe, that go with silence," said the Lord, speaking to Isaias, "I will bring upon them the waters of the powerful river which shall come from Assyria to overflow all their banks."[11] Jesus Christ could not forget that symbolism; did he not recall its sense by that

[10] John ix. 7.

[11] Isaias viii. 6.

prescription, of which possibly the idea does not at first strike us? But St. John has noted it, because he has penetrated further into the thought of his Master; he remembers all and has understood all.

However, a miracle quite otherwise affecting has left a ray of immortal light in the soul of the faithful companion of Jesus.

With him behold ourselves in the family of Bethany, and through him all becomes visible to our eyes around the gloomy sepulchre wherein Lazarus sleepeth. The village of Bethany is situated at a short distance from the Holy City, to the east of the Mount of Olives. John has verified that. "Now Bethania was near Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs off." The white houses of the town, still standing, gleam amidst the olive-trees and the fig-trees, which surround it with a girdle of shade. The hills which overlook it hide it from the world. It is an abode of peace, an asylum for prayer, and for Jesus it was a refuge of rest, for he had found there the only true earthly blessing—hearts which understood him and which beat in unison with his own. St. Luke, in a few words, makes us well understand the attraction felt by the divine Master towards that house so often honored by his presence.[12] John permits us to enter therein: for it is no strange house to him; he knows all its secrets, he experiences all its sorrows, and he communicates to us his lively sympathy for that sick man, who, like himself, is the well-loved disciple of their Master Jesus.[13]

Jesus was far from thence, he was in Perea, when he received tidings of the perilous state and, soon after, of the death of Lazarus. "Lazarus our friend sleepeth," said he to his disciples. "Let us go," replied one of them—"let us go down with the Master, and let us die with him."

[12] Luke x. 38-42. [13] John xi. 3.

They therefore set out. John is there, seeing everything, and graving in his soul the indelible impress of all that journey, which his style has so well preserved. He knows where Martha was, and where Mary wept, when the Lord presented himself. He even detects the signs which Martha makes to her sister when the Master has arrived. He notes the place of sepulchre, and the number of days Lazarus has lain therein: it is, according to Jewish usage, a funeral grotto, not far from the house. One of the sisters, less tender and less preoccupied, dares make to the Master a complaint which almost amounts to a reproach: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." That is the character of Martha. The other sister is lost in her deep sorrow, in which all her sentiments are absorbed; we recognize the soul of Mary. They repair to the tomb. Jesus sees them both weeping, and he weeps. Every step and every movement of the Son of God, his language, his shudder, his emotion, his tears, his inmost feelings, all which could be discovered only by the closest witness of that affecting scene, remains ineffaceable in the Gospel of St. John. How can we doubt the veracity of the evangelical fact when we read those memoirs, when we hear that testimony, when we distinguish that accent? Elsewhere John mentions his place in the circumstances which he relates; here we hear every throb of his heart.[14]

[14] See Pressensé, *Jesus Christ, His Time, His Life, and His Labors*, p. 530, and sequel: "The resurrection of Lazarus is one of the gospel facts most frequently called in question. The disbelief is primarily founded upon the silence of the synoptics (Strauss, *Die Halben und die Ganzen*). If, in the history of Jesus, the synoptics do not relate the resurrection of Lazarus, they allude to facts which closely relate to it. Thus St. Mark (xiv. 3-9) mentions the act by which Mary of Bethany expresses her lively gratitude for the resurrection of her brother. Furthermore, all the Evangelists agree in describing the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and in representing to us the implacable resolution of the Sanhedrim to strike a final blow. Without the resurrection of Lazarus, we could understand neither that enthusiasm nor that outburst of hatred. Nothing during his abode in Perea could fur-

II.

Such is the living and irrecusable verity wherewith St. John viewed the configuration of places and of facts during the ministry of Jesus. The physiognomy of the various personages who passed under his vision left no less vivid an impression upon his soul.

First comes Nicodemus, the inquisitive but timid and hesitating rabbi, whose doubtful face has already appeared to us under the shades of night, but whose features John will soon perceive assuming more energy in the bosom of the Sanhedrim, and whom he will meet later beside the sepulchre of his Master.

Next appears Caiphas, that singular physiognomy of the devout hypocrite, the cunning politician, the docile instrument of Annas, his father-in-law and predecessor, the tool of the stranger, feigning patriotism, and daring to demand that the Innocent One should perish for the salvation of all; a Sadducee holding cheap the next world, and defending his sanctuary, as the craftsmen of Ephesus guarded the temple of Diana, for the sake of the honor and the profits accruing therefrom to his pride and his cupidity. "The Romans will come, and take away our place and nation," said he, turning pale with fear. It was, in fact, the Roman Valerius Gratus who had conferred upon him the high-priesthood,[15] and John rightly designates him as the high-priest—"that year." Was that not the epoch wherein

nish its motive. Some new event must have taken place between the last sojourn of Jesus in the holy city and his triumphal re-entrance. John alone fills up the vacuum. The very tone of his narrative bears a seal of authenticity which at once strikes every unprejudiced reader. As to the silence of the synoptics, it readily explains itself from the moment wherein we consider the first three Gospels more especially as the collection of Galilean occurrences."

[15] Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, ii. 2.

the pontificate, formerly perpetual, was no longer but a precarious dignity, placed at the service of Roman policy?[16]

Later, John will see Pontius Pilate figuring upon that elevated tribunal mentioned in the Roman law, and no one will have better studied him than the disciple in all the complexity of his character, already so fully sketched by Josephus: a magistrate without conviction as well as without conscience, the slave of self-interest, alike sceptical and superstitious, trembling before the merest suspicion of high treason, but instinctively recovering the sentiment of right which Roman genius never lays aside, a character verging on extremes and violent through weakness, by turns awkwardly insulting the Jews, and delivering up to them the Just Man. Is he not the same man whom Josephus represents to us as irritating Jerusalem, by bringing in thither a Roman garrison with their eagles, and then wishing to build aqueducts to please that same nation? He who said smilingly, "What is truth?" and who turns his back upon it, is that not a Roman of the Empire of Tiberius, and the worthy predecessor of him who said, "The only thing certain is that there is nothing certain, and nothing can surpass the misery of man excepting his pride"?[17]

But it is not only such a person of higher distinction whom John has selected; it is the entire sect of Pharisees, the Scribes, and the elders of the people, who are pierced through by the penetrating eye of the disciple of Jesus. Behold he hears them imputing to his Master the unpardonable crime of having cured a cripple or a man born blind, on the sacred day of the Sabbath. How should that

[16] See M. Wallon, *The Belief due to the Gospel*, pt. ii. ch. i.; *Gospel and History*, p. 266.

[17] "Ut solum certum sit nihil esse certi, nec miserius quidquam homine nec superbius."—Pliny the Elder.

not fail to happen? What was styled Sabbatism had at that time become a regular superstition. Men declared that pestilence desolated the universe because the Sabbatical year had not been observed with sufficient fidelity.[18] Exile was likewise the punishment of idolatry, of incest, of murder, and of the violation of that respected day. "God pardons all to him who keeps the Sabbath," said the law of the Talmud, and it was thought that the perfect observance of two Sabbaths would have saved Israel.[19]

When Jesus justifies himself in the eyes of those fanatics, he appeals to the authority of Moses, and no other could be more specially decisive upon the sectaries of that age. "Think not," says Jesus Christ in St. John, "that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust."[20] And in another place: "Did not Moses," says he, "give you the law? Did he not permit that a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath-day?"[21] "Be thou the disciple of the Galilean," said the Pharisees to the man born blind who had just been cured by Jesus of Nazareth; "but we are the disciples of Moses."[22] They are so to the excess of veritable idolatry. In no wise admitting the possibility of a revelation superior to that of Sinai, pharisaism of that day saw in the prophet Moses a being truly divine.[23] The doctors of the law dated all their traditions from him; Josephus attributed to him a superior, heavenly, more than human nature, and no name might ever pretend to eclipse that incomparable name. John, who so frequently alleges it in these discourses of his Master, and refers to that worship of the

[18] *The Sabbatical year*, in the *Jewish economy*, was every *seventh* year, in which the Israelites were commanded to suffer their fields and vineyards to *rest*, or lie without tillage.—TRANSLATOR.

[19] *Pirkê Aboth*, in the *Talmud*, p. 521.

[20] John v. 45. [21] John vii. 19, 22. [22] John ix. 28.

[23] Gfroerer, *The Talmud and the Targums* vol. i. p. 214.

Jews for Moses, is certainly at the very heart of the affairs of his time.

What John perceived in the Jews, and that with which Jesus reproached them, was the pride of race, carried to a sort of self-adoration, joined to the contempt of others. "We are the seed of Abraham!" they continually declared, and that title served them in place of nobility and of justice.[24] Vainly did Jesus say that, being sons of Abraham, they ought to do the works of their father; that, heirs of his faith, they should hail the day he had so earnestly desired to see, and which then shone upon them. "Art thou greater than our father Abraham?" replied the Jews reproachfully.

Thus John sees it, thus does he hear it, thus does faithful history represent it to us in Jewish writings. See how, in fact, in their sacred books, they boldly formulate that indomitable pride which knew not how to yield: "Every Israelite, by himself alone, is worth before God more than all nations together, who were or who are yet to be."[25]

But what morality covered that insolent vanity! John has unmasked it. The attentive disciple has heard his Master reproach the Pharisees that their hearts were hardened and their eyes blinded by reason of their perversity of heart. "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do." When they brought the sinful woman into the presence of Jesus, and the Lord, knowing their secret lives, defied him who was without sin amongst them to cast the first stone at her, the disciple saw them steal away and disappear, one by one, beginning at the eldest. John did not deceive himself under the dead formalism of hypocritical piety. Abominable mysteries

[24] John viii. 33. See the rest of the chapter.
[25] Gfroerer, quoting *The Talmud*, i. 214.

received their consecration in the very code of their sect, wherein we read these words: "The rabbi shall walk along slowly, slightly bent, his head bowed down; he should never converse with a woman, not even with his own wife. But if he be tempted by evil nature, let him go into a place where he is unknown, let him assume dark garments and cover himself with a black veil, and then let him do what his heart commands him, and not publicly dishonor the name of God." [26] Is there anything more criminating in St. John?

III.

But still more than facts, and more than the personages amid whom he dwelt, the words of Jesus left their deep impression upon the soul of the witness of his existence. To St. John, Jesus Christ is, above all, the Word, the substantial Word which he saw shedding itself full of grace and of truth upon delighted crowds. For that reason they will occupy the principal place in his collection of souvenirs. Then the beloved disciple received them into a heart wherein the Son of God was king. Nothing, therefore, will be lost; for who is not aware that the best memory is that of the heart, and that we forget nothing, absolutely nothing, when we love?

However, the discourses which the disciple heard in the divine society of Jesus in Judea were no longer the easy, simple parables which had resounded over the hills of Galilee. Before the rabbins, whose cultivated minds disdainfully repulse whatever bears not the stamp of consummate science, the Lord will not use the language suitable to the ignorant fishermen and rough boatmen of the lake

[26] Gfroerer, quoting *The Talmud*, vol. ii. pp. 165, 167.

of Genesareth. The Scribes themselves will be subjugated by that eloquence, which had already charmed the doctors in Israel, when, for the first time, it fell from the lips of a child twelve years of age. Was it not, furthermore, the age of deep research and of learned schools? Those masters with whom Jesus Christ opened a struggle had laboriously climbed the three steps of initiation required in seating themselves in the chair of the prophets. Those Hellenist Jews, who crowded around the Temple to celebrate the Feast of the Passover or of *Phurim*,[27] had come from Athens, from Rome, from Ephesus, from Alexandria, and from Tarsus, where the Academy rose near the Synagogue. Was it not a received maxim amongst them that "He who gives himself up to those holy studies should suffer himself to be distracted by nothing along his road, should say not in travelling, That tree is slender or that furrow is deep;" but should be entirely absorbed in sacred learning, which has the key of heaven, and which renders men like to God?[28]

To this new audience a new style of eloquence was therefore addressed. St. John has collected it together. More profound and more mysterious, it lent itself to the requirements of those polished minds and of those sages of the learned Cabala. However, we still find therein that parabolic turn so familiar to Jesus. The manna, the good shepherd, the vine-stock and its shoots, still furnish him with their rustic similes. If we consider it attentively, it is the same method and the same procedure, as likewise the same doctrine, which flows from his lips. Here, again, Jesus Christ borrows his imagery from surrounding objects; but here, in the city, near the Temple, those objects are no

[27] Among the Jews, the Feast of Lots, instituted to commemorate their deliverance from the machinations of Haman. See Esther ix.—TRANSLATOR.

[28] *Talmud, Pirkê Aboth*, or *Book of Principles*, vol. ii. pp. 513, 527.

longer the fig-tree, the grain of mustard-seed, the wheat cast into the earth, or the lily-of-the-valley. Every morning, during the Feast of Tabernacles, a priest descended from the holy mountain, a golden pitcher in his hand, to the base of Moria, to draw water from the fountain of Siloe. Then he remounted, amidst a great concourse of people, to the sound of canticles and sacred trumpets, to pour over the altar the contents of his golden pitcher, in memory of Moses causing the miraculous stream to issue from the rock.[29] Jesus thence took occasion to say: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Is that not an allusion in the souvenirs of St. John?

During that same feast the immense candelabra were kept lighted, which shed their rays over all Jerusalem: that was a memorial of the luminous cloud which guided Israel during the night in the desert. Those torches were burning beside Jesus when he said to the people: "I am the light of the world." Is it presumption to view a local feature, a circumstantial figure, in those words of Jesus as reported by St. John?

John did not stop at the letter of those discourses: he penetrated their spirit, and divine eloquence found in that auditor its true intelligence and its full light. When Jesus said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," St. John understood it well of the temple of his body, as he himself explains it.[30] When the infamous Caiphas said in the council, "You know nothing, neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people," John's thought seeing beyond that of the deicide pontiff, and the universal re-

[29] See Döllinger, *Jew and Gentile*, vol. ii. Eng. Ed.
[30] John ii. 21.

demption of mankind recalling itself to his mind, "This he spoke not of himself," remarks the disciple: "but Caiphas, being the high-priest that year, prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God, that were dispersed." [31]

Vainly did the Jews pour forth against the Just Man, his Master, their coarse vituperations. The disciple soared above it; and foreseeing through all these indignities a mystery of honor: "These things said Isaias when he saw his glory, and spoke of him." [32]

The same height of view, the like penetration of the divine thought, when Jesus Christ said: "Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." [33] John again is not deceived. "Jesus," says he, "said this, signifying what death he should die." That exaltation was that of his Cross; and if to comprehend that a cross might become the centre of moral attraction of the universe was then given to a man, must it not have been that that man had entered fully into the counsels of God?

Such was St. John at the divine school. Such is what he had seen, what he had heard, and what he has handled of the Word of Life. What an auditor of his eloquence Jesus had given himself! What a contemplator of his works! What a disciple of his doctrine! Doubtless there is a wide abyss between the fisherman of yesterday and the sublime Evangelist of to-morrow; the Holy Ghost must hover over that chasm, the tongue of fire must appear, and light must be made. But already three years passed in the constant hearing of the Lord have illuminated that chaos where that eloquence has shone. Who does not see

[31] John xi. 51. [32] John xii. 41. [33] John xii. 31–33.

that it was divine eloquence? Who does not feel it vibrate in a godlike manner immediately it is touched? Who does not recognize in it the terrible yet gentle brightness which attracted St. John? The disciple receives it with a faithful soul; and thence that special power which he possesses of rendering more sensible to us the presence of God. The Sun of truth, upon rising over the world, has shed his ray over that beautiful marble of the Gospel: it gives forth heavenly sounds. It is the Word of Life, as St. John styles it, and, ever living, like the immortal source whence it has flowed, it still forces its enemies to exclaim, as in the days of the Apostle: "Truly never man spake like this man."[34]

[34] John vii. 46.

CHAPTER V.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE EUCHARIST, ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

I.

MEANWHILE, in proportion as he saw and heard his divine Master more familiarly, the thoughts of St. John became purer, and rose to a truer intelligence of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. It is not true to say, with false learning, that it is the disciple who later, having proclaimed him God, remodelled the Master to that image. Is it not more likely that the Master had fashioned the mind of his Apostle? The Gospel demonstrates it, and it is time to show under what entirely new aspect "the kingdom of God" presented itself to John in the lessons of the Lord.

The idea which the son of Salome had formed to himself previously of the kingdom of God, as we have already seen, differed but little from that conceived by the entire Judaism of that time. It was the Messianic reign predicted by the prophets, with which the national ambition of the Jews mingled its pretensions to the temporal domination of the world. The oft-quoted words of Suetonius, regarding the universal ruler who was to come from the East, are but the echo of the feverish hopes of the Jews. But those hopes had never assumed a more exclusively political character. The most ancient portions of the Talmud, the

celebrated Targums of Jonathan and of Onkelos,[1] Aramean paraphrases of the Old Testament, the apocryphal collections, such as the Book of Enoch and the Fourth Book of Esdras, exalted that hope. Christ, the son of David, will possess the throne of his father. He will have a forerunner—Elias, or some of the great prophets, recalled to life for that purpose. A new Moses, he will perform miracles analogous to those of that thaumaturgus. Above all, he will restore the glory of Israel, will reconquer the sacred soil of Palestine, will deliver the ten tribes, and will wage a final and decisive war against evil, symbolized by the mysterious names of Gog and of Magog. A new Jerusalem and a more beautiful Temple will attract to themselves all the nations of the earth, and the Jewish reign will have no end.[2]

In the beginning John possibly shared those national dreams; but gradually a revolution took place in his mind regarding the true nature of his Master's reign. Already, while yet at the school of John the Baptist, when the Pharisees had sent their deputies to the Precursor to know if he were not that Elias whose coming was prophesied by their traditions, the disciple had heard the Baptizer rectify that popular belief; the Gospel did the rest—all, all terrestrial imagery vanishing little by little, the Apostle will enter fully into the intelligence of a spiritual rule over souls.

It was primarily the idea of God which assumed in St.

[1] *Targum* (from the Chaldaic, *interpretation*), a translation or paraphrase of the Sacred Scriptures in the Chaldee language or dialect.—Translator.

[2] These hopes, so frequently mentioned in St. John, are set forth in the fragments of the Book of Enoch, published by Syncellus, and collected in the second volume of the *Codex Pseudepigraph. Veter. Testam.* of Fabricius (Leipsic, 1853). That book is believed to be contemporary with Jesus Christ. The *Targums*, or paraphrases of Onkelos and of Jonathan, are prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. The Talmudic tradition makes Onkelos a disciple of Hillel, and Jonathan a disciple of Gamaliel, the master of St. Paul.

John a purity and a depth never bestowed upon it by any philosophy nor any religion. The God who from that time forward manifested himself to the Apostle was not the old Deity of anthropomorphism and of idolatry upon whom Judaism had already done summary execution. No more was it the vague deity of pantheism or of the Stoic sect, such as was dreamed of by the schools of the East and of Rome. Even the strict and exclusive notions of the Jews regarding the Lord of Israel gave place in his mind to a wider conception of the great Being whom the universe adores. "Woman," said the Revealer in St. John, "believe me, that the hour cometh when you shall neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem adore the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth." [3]

But what specially constitutes true progress between the conceptions of the Biblical prophets and those of the great Apostle, is that the former ordinarily deduced the qualities of God and his moral attributes from his exterior operations in the world—such as his power, his goodness, and his providence. John, diving into the abstraction of the Divine essence, penetrates into the very bosom of the infinite Being, and contemplates his God in what he is by himself. These words, "God is a spirit, no one has seen God"; "The Word is light, light is life"; "I am the principle, I am the truth, the life," are flashes which the eagle has caught from the focus of eternal life. "O spiritual contemplator, O winged cherubim," sang the early Christians in his honor, "you have gazed upon the very face of God!" [4]

[3] John iv. 21.

[4] "Speculator spiritalis,
Quasi cherubim sub alis
Dei vides faciem."—*Hymni Latini Medii Ævi*, t. ii.

At the same time that he entered, at the school of Jesus, into the familiar life of God, the social life which God possesses within himself likewise manifested itself to St. John. Namely, the Trinity in its divine relations, the generation of the Word, the procession of the Holy Ghost. The Holy of Holies in his entirety discovered himself to the eyes of his confidant; and if it be demonstrated that, in proportion as the notion of God rises within souls, moral life advances and becomes purer among nations, what perfection of progress was promised to the world by that revelation committed to St. John!

But was not that infinite, absolute, and perfect God, by that alone, an inaccessible God? It is a fact perfectly recognizable in our own day that the idea of God had undergone, during the age preceding the Christian era, a profound modification amongst the Jews, whether of Alexandria or even in Palestine. More impressed than ever by the divine incomprehensibility, the rabbins concluded, therefore, that God could never either reveal himself nor communicate himself directly to man. The divers theophanies of the Old Testament were interpreted allegorically; in the place of God shown to his creature, they presented either an angel or the sacred cloud styled the *Shechinah*. Metaphysic and mystic speculation willed a wider separation between humanity and the divinity, whom it banished to the lofty solitudes of heaven. Thence to the belief in the Word-God made flesh, measure the distance and realize the unbridling of Judaism against the Son of Man, styling himself the Son of God.

John learned that this Son of God was the new being delegated by the Father to govern his kingdom here below. He heard him repeat: "The Father loveth the Son: and he hath given all things into his hand."[5] "Neither doth

[5] John iii. 35.

the Father judge any man: but hath given all judgment to the Son. The Father hath given the Son power to do judgment, because he is the Son of man." [6]

"Art thou a king?" formally enquired of Jesus the Roman Procurator. "Yes, I am a king; thou hast said it," replied the Lord; and at the same time he explained how that kingdom of God was to be understood.[7]

It was now no longer the terrestrial kingdom dreamed of by St. John. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus to the judge before whom had been arraigned that strange competitor to the sceptre of Cæsar.[8] Christ, such as the Apostle at present understands him, has no other throne but a cross, no other glory but his sacrifice, no other legions save his angels; and when the crowd shall come to seize and to crown him, he will flee to the mountain to escape from those who will seek to make him king.[9]

Therefore his kingdom will be pre-eminently styled "the kingdom of heaven." Its prince and its laws come from heaven; and, utterly a stranger to earthly magnificence, that reign will have its full development only in the eternal future.

It began here below. The grand royalty exercised itself in three regions, which shared amongst themselves the name and the prerogatives of the kingdom of heaven. They were: the reign of God in souls, the reign of God in the Church, the reign of God in heaven.

When St. John recalled these words of Jesus Christ, "The kingdom of God is within you," "Unless a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," [10] he understood it to refer to the moral renovation and to the divine life which grace spreads within every soul. A new birth, a new spirit, a new gene-

[6] John v. 22, 27. [7] John xviii. 37. [8] John xviii. 36.
[9] John vi. 15. [10] John iii. 5.

ration, a redeemed existence, a purified existence, a transformed existence—it was nothing less than a species of divination of man, consecrated king by God until he can be a king near God.

When St. John heard his Master propose the parable of the shepherd gathering his sheep into the same fold, it was another figure of the kingdom of God; but here the kingdom of God was the Church.[11] To that kingdom Jesus gives no limits; all sheep will have a place in his sheep-fold, and the unity which he seeks is universality. No spirit of violence, no domination. The king is a shepherd, as the ancients already were accustomed to designate their princes;[12] but this latter is pre-eminently the Good Shepherd.[13] He loves his sheep, he knows them, he leads them, he defends them against the wolf, he gives his life for them; he reigns through charity. And when King Jesus gives himself a successor in his sovereignty, it is under the name of shepherd that he designates and appoints the prince of his people. "Feed my sheep," says he to Peter; "feed my lambs." The sole condition which he imposes upon that king, and the only oath which he requires from him, is the triple protestation of an indefectible love.[14]

Finally, when Jesus Christ spoke of returning into his Father's kingdom, saying that he was no more to drink of an earthly cup until he had entered the kingdom of God, he taught his followers that a celestial reign should be the complement of the reign inaugurated in the Church and within souls. That is the kingdom which the Apocalypse was to show to St. John. Thither Jesus Christ went to prepare a place for us; there would reign a joy which naught could snatch from us, the joy of the happy delivery

[11] John x. 1, and sequel.
[12] See apud *Homerum*, ποιμένες λαῶν.
[13] John x. 14.
[14] John xxi, 15 17.

of a mother who has brought a son into the world; there will be consummated with God and in God that unity of beings which charity will have commenced upon earth; there, in short, Jesus Christ will appear such as he is; and, seeing him face to face, we shall be like unto him, happy kings with him. "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne."[15] "Behold," says Bossuet, "the munificence of our prince reaches such an excess of goodness that he makes monarchs of all his subjects. He wishes to see at his court only crowned heads."

II.

But is our Christ living only in heaven? King of the Church, and ruler over souls, was he not present in each one of those provinces of the kingdom of God? If he were the water of life, quenching the thirst of all souls here below, where was the spring? Were he the light illuminating men, where was its focus? There was a supreme and most divine mystery of which no one more fully possessed the secret than St. John.

It was the day succeeding the multiplication of loaves in the desert. That desert belonged to the territory of Bethsaida, the land of the Apostle. A mountain bounded it towards the north, and it was upon that mountain that Jesus had retired far from the multitude who sought him as king.[16] Then profiting of the night, he had secretly de-

[15] Apoc. iii. 21.

[16] John vi. 1, and sequel. That celebrated spot can yet be visited. "We were approaching Tiberias," writes De Saulcy, "when we turned near the edge of a ravine where several basaltic rocks rose slightly above the tall grasses. 'Chouf,' said the Mussulman, addressing me, 'look! those stones are the stones of the five loaves.' There, then, for the Mussulmans as well as for the Christians, is the site of the miracle of the multiplication of loaves. Furthermore, it would be difficult to select a spot for a sermon

scended to the sea-shore; and, notwithstanding the high wind which swelled the waves, he walked upon the lake, whereon he was met by the barks of his apostles, thirty furlongs from the shore, towards the fourth watch. These details are from St. John.[17] They received him on board, landed him upon the opposite shore, and went with him to Capharnaum.

The people had flocked thither from all parts, determined to recognize him as king of Israel. The multiplication of loaves specially confirmed their belief; for it was an accepted tradition amongst the Jews that the Messiah, like Moses, was to bring down food from heaven.[18] Alluding, therefore, to that general opinion, some of them said to Jesus: "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' What sign therefore dost thou show us, that we may see, and may believe thee?"[19]

It was then that St. John heard the proclamation of a doctrine wholly divine, which was the complement of all that he had learned concerning the kingdom of God.

Summoned in due form to produce supernatural bread, after the example of Moses, Jesus Christ began by offering himself as the spiritual food of that deified life which he brought into the world: "I am the bread of life: he who

whence the eye of the audience could gaze over a more magnificent panorama. And if the tradition be true, as I am willing to believe, Christ chose one of the most beautiful situations in the world to spread the seed of his verifying word."—See *Travels about the Dead Sea and in Biblical Lands*, vol. ii. p. 461.

[17] John vi. 19.

[18] In the *Midrasch Coheleth*, or *Exposition of Ecclesiastes*, one of the earliest works written by the Jews after the coming of Christ, we read as follows: "Such was the first Goël or Liberator, such will be the second. The first Liberator brought manna from heaven, as it is written: 'I will cause bread to rain down upon you from heaven above.' In like manner the last Goël will bring down manna from heaven."—Schoettgen, *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ*, t. i. p. 359 (Dresden and Leipsic, 1733).

[19] John vi. 30.

cometh to me, shall not hunger: and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst." [20] But up to that time he still spoke merely of the nourishment of souls by faith, as he himself explains it: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in me, hath life everlasting." [21]

That bread of wisdom, entirely figurative, has no analogy with the wholly material aliment of manna obtained by Moses. Jesus, therefore, did not as yet reply to the demand made of him by the Jews; he did not fulfil the hopes of the crowd. But behold, suddenly, at a well-chosen moment of his sermon, he promises another bread of life, far superior to the former. John transcribes a new and strange language upon a novel subject.[22] The Master not only proposed that all should come to him or should believe in him, but that they should *eat* him.[23] That bread was no longer abstractly faith; that bread was *his flesh.* And not, surely, a symbolical and figurative flesh, as Jesus Christ explained: "The flesh," said Jesus, "which I will give for the life of the world"; [24] the same of which John said that "the Word was made flesh"; that it was that real flesh which we were to eat; the Lord made it not merely a precept, but an express condition of life or of death.

Then, as if that injunction to eat his divine flesh were not sufficiently formal, Jesus completed it by that of drinking *his blood*—more precise, more novel, and still more inexplicably allegorical.[25]

Thus no more types, no more symbols. Language disavows them, manners repudiate them, and Jesus is careful to

[20] John vi. 35. [21] John vi. 44-47.

[22] This change begins with the forty-eighth verse. Besides, all Catholic divines—Calixtus, Hackspan, Grünembert—and the English Jeremy Taylor, as well as many other distinguished Protestants, agree in recognizing therein the promise of the Eucharist. See more particularly the convincing dissertations of Cardinal Wiseman upon the "Real Presence," dis. i., in the *Lectures upon the Gospel.*

[23] John vi. 50. [24] John vi. 52. [25] John vi. 54.

disclaim them in the outset: "My flesh is meat *indeed*, and my blood is drink *indeed*." [26] It pleased him lately to interpret the picture which he gave of faith; here he explains nothing, because nothing is symbolical; and the full assurance of a real presence of his body, of his blood, of his humanity, and of his divinity, is repeated at every phrase more clearly, more distinctly, and still more insistently. In place of, as formerly, Jesus asked men merely "to come to him," drawn by the Father, the effect of that other bread is to cause himself to come, and "to dwell in us, as we shall abide in him." [27] Instead of, as lately, when praising the bread of the divine Word, he spoke of it as of a gift already bestowed and possessed; "The Bread of God," said he, "*cometh* down from heaven; it *giveth* life to the world." The bread which is his flesh is as yet but a promise. "The bread which *I will give*," he repeats, "is my flesh for the life of the world." [28] Jesus, at that time, had not instituted the Table of the Last Supper.

Who could be deceived? What could be said more clearly, and at the same time under what more august formula could a more divine mystery be proclaimed?

It was primarily an affirmation, the persistent affirmation of the substantial, identical reality of the divine body and blood become the food of the world.

It was secondarily an oath, the solemn oath of Truth which can swear but by herself: "*Verily*, *verily*, I say unto you!"

It was a precise, universal, and capital law: "*Amen*, *Amen*, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you!"

Finally, it was an energetic protestation against obstinate incredulity. And as that great miracle required some

[26] John vi. 56. [27] John vi. 57. [28] John vi. 33, 52.

pledge which might be, as it were, the proof thereof, the Lord appealed from it to the day whereon those Jews should behold that same resuscitated flesh, thenceforth freed from the laws of matter as it is in the Host, ascend triumphantly to the right hand of the Father, without ceasing to remain living upon the altars. "Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" [29]

Such was the complement of that divine conception of the kingdom of God, such as it had been learned and understood by St. John. By one of those inventions of which he alone held the secret, the King of the Church and of souls was about to establish his presence in the heart of his empire, without, however, renouncing his reascension into the glory of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus Christ was to dwell not only with us, he was to live within us.

Thus was it understood by the Jews, for whom that doctrine was at once so clear in its formula and so mysterious in its sense, that, unable either to deny it or to comprehend it, they adopted the alternative of turning their backs upon it and of quitting Jesus.[30]

Thus was it understood by the Master, who pities them, who loves them, but who suffers them to depart rather than to retract his words, because he cannot tamper with truth nor say that which is false.

Thus was it understood by St. John, within whom the remembrance of the divine conversation had left so pure and so clear a light. A familiar listener to the doctrine of Jesus, we notice that he likewise constitutes himself its interpreter at need; and especially he is careful, in the misunderstandings of the Jews, to translate the sense of the figurative terms employed by his Master. When the Lord said, "Lazarus our friend sleepeth," St. John explains it

[29] John vi. 62. [30] John vi. 67.

by the sleep of death. When Jesus spoke of rebuilding the temple of God in three days, John expounds it of the temple of his body. Here no commentary either elucidates or softens the words of the Master. Like the Jews, John perceives clearly that *That saying is hard;* but it is so manifest that we have but to adore it. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" said Peter; "thou hast the words of eternal life."[31]

III.

Whilst giving St. John that clear and certain revelation of the mystery, Jesus taught him, in the same words, the blessings which result therefrom to the deified world. That efficacy, which was to establish the reign of God within souls, resumed itself in the mind of St. John into one word, which says all, and which he constantly repeats—and that word is "life."

Life thus understood, supernatural life, was in its origin a participation of the very life of God: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me."[32] For that reason that bread is styled "celestial bread," "bread brought down from heaven," earth being incapable of furnishing us a food which would procure us life. It had withered within us since the fall, like a dried root which can produce no fruits. No more light, no more love, no more strength; in a word, it was truly death, according to the ordinary expression of St. John.

But the new Manna came to confer upon souls, in each of their powers, a superior and immortal vitality. Focus

[31] John vi. 69.

[32] John vi. 58. See the developments of this doctrine in St. Augustine *in Evang. S. John, Tract.* xxvi. cap. vi. col. 1612.

of light and centre of faith, the Eucharist was the full revelation of truth upon God, upon the world, and upon us. Infinite charity! the Eucharist offered to the heart the real, and at the same time the ideal, object, beginning to assuage at the chalice of the altar that deep thirst of love which will be quenched only in the kingdom of heaven. Living bread! the Eucharist was the sustenance of that moral strength which was to produce saints, virgins, and martyrs. It was Christ in all his entirety who passed into souls with that triple beauty of intelligence, of courage, and of fruitful love which John had seen in him. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." "I live; you shall live also," he repeated elsewhere.

We have here below but fragmentary life: the Eucharist gives us in Jesus the plenitude, "the exuberance of life," as he himself said.

We have here below but a divided life: the divine bread gives us a participation in the united life, in communication not only with God, but with all souls who feed upon him.

We have here below but life in outline: Jesus brings us into the finished, perpetual, eternal life: "He that eateth that bread shall live forever."

Finally, the body itself, vivified by that bread, was to borrow therefrom a germ of resurrection, which was in the end to redeem it from nihility, and to cause it to spring to life from the very bosom of the tomb: "Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. . . . He that eateth this bread shall live forever. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

It was, therefore, a complete regeneration of the whole being, and St. John could say: "For ourselves, we know that we have passed from death unto life."

Again, having learned the mystery of God in the school of the Master, having likewise known the blessing it was to the world, St. John could not be ignorant of its source. Familiar intercourse with the Divine Friend had discovered to him the secret, and in like manner, as he had resumed its effects in one single word—"life"—he recognized the origin thereof in another word—"love."

John has not been the historian of the Sacrament; he has been its philosopher and its theologian. He was not called upon to relate its institution, its rite, and the attendant circumstances which the other Evangelists had given before him. But, beginning the account of that hour wherein the Lord "Jesus was about to pass out of this world," leaving here this pledge, John recalls merely that, "having loved his own who were in the world, Jesus Christ would love them *unto the end*."[33] The holy Eucharist was for him that end—that is to say, as St. Augustine explains it, that completion and that absolute term of love.[34]

It was, in short, love carried to its extremest limits, such as man may dream it, but such as can be realized only by God.

It was love reaching the limits of time through perpetuity; for, whilst in this world all the dearest ties are broken, the divine Friend engages to remain our guest until the consummation of ages.

It was love reaching the final extremities of extent as well as those of duration; and whilst with us it is the infirmity of love to be the prisoner of space, and to languish sadly under the irremediable evil of separation, the love of God had just surprised the secret of being everywhere,

[33] John xiii. 1.

[34] S. Aug. *in Evang. Joan. Tract.* liv. col 1783. "Semper et sine fine nos dilexit."

personally, wholly, bestowing itself upon each of the children of his immense family.

It was love overcoming the barrier of bodies, penetrating and bringing souls into communion; and whilst our alliances merely attain that which is lowest in human being, whilst those unions of those who form but one body, but one heart, but one life confounded with another life, are, in human language, but a pompous metaphor and a poetical simile, communion with Jesus was so complete that it resembled that of the three divine Persons forming but one sole God.

Thus real presence, perpetual presence, communion, sacrifice, all that confounds us, all that charms us, all that astounds the mind, all that the heart craves, finds its principle in those words of St. John, *In finem dilexit:* the Eucharist was infinity in love.

Such was the Eucharist, such was the kingdom of God, according to St. John.

Was man capable of similar doctrine? Would even any other disciple have gathered it from the lips of God? The Fathers have been unable so to believe. They have declared that a knowledge so high and so familiar of the Divinity could only have been drawn at the pure well-spring of living truth. Then, reminding us of the evening on which St. John had rested his head upon the bosom of his Master,[35]

[35] Origen. *in Joan.* t. ii. p. 6, A: "Audeamus dicere primitias Scripturarum omnium Evangelium esse; Evangeliorum vero primitias Evangelium a Joanne traditum. Cujus sensum percipere nemo potest, nisi qui supra pectus Jesu recubuerit, vel acceperit a Jesu Mariam." S. Ambros. *Ep.* ci. ii. ep. lxv.: "In Christi pectore recumbebat Joannes, ut de principali illo secretoque sapientiæ fonte hausisse divina proderetur mysteria." S. Chrysost. *de Incomprehensibili Homil.* iv. n. 3. S. Aug. *de Consensu Evangelior* i. iv. In a hymn sung in honor of St. John on the banks of the Rhine we read:

"Jesu cum recubuisti
Supra pectus, ebibisti
Dicta Evangelica."

—*Hymni Latini Medii Ævii*, Fr. Jos. Mone, t. i. p. 120.

they have arrived at the conclusion that, if great thoughts come from the heart, divine thoughts can issue only from the heart of God.

Let us approach that heart, let us visit that spring, let us describe that evening.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. JOHN AT THE LAST SUPPER.

I.

FOR the last three years St. John had never quitted his Master. He had gathered up his words in his mind, and had fixed their circumstances in his soul. He had likewise shared his sufferings; and the insults of the Jews, the hatred of the Pharisees, and the jealousy of the priests towards the Son of God have nowhere a more connected nor more touching history than in St. John.

But, in those latter times, the Apostle attests that their rage, smothered at first, broke forth daily in more sinister menaces. Already violence had been attempted.[1] One day the Pharisees had sent persons to lay hands upon him.[2] Another day they had sought to stone him.[3] John knew that it had been decreed in council that the Just Man should die.[4] He had afterwards seen him escape with great difficulty from their deicide hands.[5] Finally, the disciples of Jesus, as he informs us, were forced to follow the Master into a species of exile, to the city of Ephrem, near the desert, and to dwell there in secret, to secure himself from the evils ready to burst upon that sacred head.[6]

But the festival of the Pasch having brought him back to the city, popular enthusiasm saluted his entrance by so public a token of gratitude and delight that the enemies

[1] John vii. 30; xi. 53. [2] John vii. 32. [3] John viii. 59.
[4] John xi. 47. [5] John vii. 44; xii. 36. [6] John xi. 54.

of the Saviour resolved to compass his ruin, and John foresaw near and sad events.

Jesus had long since declared: "My hour is not yet come."[7]

The disciple heard him now say:

"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

"Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal."[8]

"Now this he said," remarked the disciple, "signifying what death he should die."[9]

He repeated to the crowds that his light would soon be withdrawn from them;[10] but never had that light shone more divinely brilliant in their sight. The soul seemed already filled with that heaven whither she was tending; and John, who followed her throughout that final phase, could argue thence that the hour of highest revelations and grandest actions was approaching.

It was the last week of the earthly life of the Son of God. The fourth day, the Lord, having entered into the precincts of the Temple, had proposed a double parable to the people. Having first told them the history of the wicked husbandmen, who put to death the son of the owner of the vineyard, he had added the allegory of a great supper which a king prepared for the marriage of his son, and to which he invited the poor and the lowly: "Come, all is ready." He had likewise represented his kingdom under the emblem of virgins, who come, with their lamps, to the nuptial banquet of the bridegroom. Thus, in that approaching exaltation, as he styles his death, two things

[7] John vii. 6. [8] John xii. 23. [9] John xii. 33. [10] John xii. 35.

equally preoccupy that noble heart: the Eucharist and the Cross, the gift of himself in love and in sacrifice.

The morrow of that day, the thirteenth of the month of Nisan, which fell on a Thursday, and the first of the days whereon the Jews were accustomed to eat unleavened bread, Jesus had gone forth from the city, probably to Bethany, to the home of Lazarus, whom he went to visit for the last time. "The Lord," says Bossuet, "quitted Jerusalem every evening, and concealed himself at Bethany, whence he returned every morning to perform his functions. By leaving the city each night, he escaped his enemies, who dared not seize upon him in the day-time, because of the people." [11]

It was there that his disciples came to say to him: "Master, where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Pasch?" [12]

But that Pasch was to be no ordinary Passover. Jesus, wishing to betow upon it a special solemnity, selected two of his disciples, the chiefest of all, to make the necessary preparations. One of them was St. John. "He chose Peter and John," relates the Gospel, "and he sent them, saying: Go and prepare the Pasch for us, that we may eat." [13]

The Fathers discover in that choice a living symbol of the double disposition which God demands from those who approach his Pasch. Peter represents faith, John typifies love. Thus John began to assume, in the cenacle, that place and that noble character which he will never more lose. It was fitting that he who had been previously initiated into the depths of the mystery should be the first minister thereof when that hour had arrived.

[11] Bossuet, *Meditations on the Gospel*, 19th day, p. 496.
[12] Matt. xxvi. 17.
[13] Luke xxii. 8.

Having taken them aside, Jesus gave to both other instructions still more precise.

"As you go to the city," said he, "there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water." Was not that the water destined to knead the unleavened bread which the Jews were obliged to draw on the eve of the Pasch? "You shall say to that man: The Master saith to thee: My time is at hand; with thee I make the Pasch with my disciples. Where is the guest-chamber, where he may eat the Paschal lamb? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished. There prepare." [14]

The particular interest given by Jesus Christ to that solemnity, those precise details, suddenly become worthy of the care of a God, and that seeking for splendor in him who had deigned to be born in a stable, to live in a shop, and who was the morrow to die upon the cross, must have been for the Apostles the harbinger of the great things which Jesus was preparing. At least, John could understand that they were about to receive the final manifestations of farewell.

He obeyed the Master. Commentators tell us that it was one of the disciples, John, surnamed Mark, who had the honor of loaning his house for the Last Supper. Peter and John prepared therein, according to the formal expressions of Jesus, a fine, large hall, evincing in that grandeur, and in that decency of the first Christian sanctuary, the proper character and the prophetic law of the future worship.[15]

[14] Matt. xxvi. 18; Luke xxii. 12.

[15] "Without the city of Jerusalem, three hundred steps from the gate of Sion and on the slope of the mountain, was an isolated building, two stories high, since called the *Cenacle* of the Lord. On the ground-floor, the first hall, covered with a carpet, according to Oriental usage, served as a dining-room. In the second, somewhat smaller, Jesus Christ washed the feet of his Apostles. The same arrangement prevailed in the upper story where the disciples were assembled. It was there that the Lord ate the last Pasch and

II.

Everything being ready, and evening having arrived, Jesus entered the cenacle, with his twelve Apostles, for the sacred supper, the supper of unleavened bread.

Exodus had prescribed that every one should eat the Passover with those of his family. The father, after prayer, sent round several times a cup, mingled with water. Each time that it passed from hand to hand, they chanted a psalm of adoration. The son of the house enquired the motive of the festival, which gave room for the account of the departure from Egypt, told in concise terms. Then the lamb was eaten with unleavened bread. It was that meal which the Hebrews took standing, their loins girded, and staff in hand, like travellers, in remembrance of their miraculous delivery out of Egypt.

But the Lord thought of a longer journey, and words of adieu began to mix with the words of love: "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." [16]

The ancient Pasch, of which Jesus recalled the remembrance, had been the passage from Egyptian idolatry to the unity of God proclaimed in the desert: "I am Him who am." The new Pasch, whereof he prepared the coming, was the passage from the faith in a living God of the Jews to the faith and love of God in an instant present amid

instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist; it was there he appeared to his disciples the day of his resurrection; it was there that the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles. . . . Finally, the Holy Cenacle became the first Christian temple seen by the world, and it was thence that the Apostles set forth, poor and naked, to ascend all the thrones of the earth." See Chateaubriand, *Itinerary from Paris to Jerusalem.*

[16] Luke xxii. 15.

men until the consummation of the world: "Behold, I am with you all days!"

They then ate the lamb, which the disciples shared amongst themselves, amid those conversations filled equally with fear and with hope. That farewell of his Master, together with the sight of the symbolical victim, might already reveal to John the prophetic sense of that name, the first which he had heard given to the Redeemer: "Behold the Lamb of God!"

But it is now from himself that we must learn things, every feature of which reveals the presence of his memory and the deep impression left upon his heart.

The legal Pasch ended, "Jesus rose from the table," relates the disciple, in order quickly to accomplish a mystery far greater than the figurative action which he had just terminated. As, in a few seconds, he was to supersede the ancient sacrifice and the ancient Pasch, by another sacrifice and a new altar, he felt himself, as it were, filled with a divine respect for those fishermen, though poor, simple, and lowly, called to the honor of becoming his priests. He, therefore, rose before them as before princes, girded himself to serve them, poured water into a basin, thus assuming the form and the ministry of a slave; and he, the God Creator, kneeling down, washed the feet of those men, drying them afterward with a humility which stupefied them.[17]

It was no rare thing, in that time and in those lands, to wash the feet of the guests before the hour of the festival. But what signified that rite when supper was ended; or, rather, what other supper, still grander than the Pasch, was then to be celebrated? The Apostles wondered again, relates St. John. Peter remonstrated. He could not comprehend whence came such honor to men. But that which

[17] John xiii. 4, and sequel.

the humiliated Lord venerated in them was not man, it was God, of whom they were about to become the ministers and the temple. In like manner, as in a moment, Jesus was to say to them: "Do this for a commemoration of me." So he said to them: "In washing your feet, I have given you an example: that as I have done to you, so you do also one to another." [18]

Greatness and abasement, dignity and charity of the sacred ministry, Jesus Christ taught the Apostles of the future that those two extremes should thenceforth become inseparable things, and that, if their eminent, superhuman mission is to consecrate the Host and to penetrate the heavens, there is another which prostrated them to earth. It is that which dedicates them to serve, to pardon, to purify, and to absolve, to wash all the feet soiled by earth, to heal all the feet wounded by thorns, and to wipe them with patient charity which nothing repels: "You call me Master and Lord: and you say well, for so I am. If I then, being *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." [19]

III.

The lesson of sacramental purity being given, Jesus resumed his seat at table. The meal recommenced. This is what interpreters style the second supper. Something more solemn, in the Evangelists, announces the sacred hour and the approach of the mystery. For that new supper, the disciples, according to the general custom borrowed from the East, are represented to us half reclining upon couches. Guests usually sat thereon three by three; and those banqueting couches were styled *triclinia*, by reason of

[18] John xiii. 15. [19] John xiii. 13.

that custom and of that disposition.[20] That is indicated by St. John in the passage where he mentions that he had his face turned towards the breast and the countenance of his Master.[21] Peter was on the other side of that *triclinium*, as we shall see by the sequel; Jesus between the two. The place of the young disciple was that named "the bosom of the father of the family," and the Gospel occasionally alludes to it. It was the favorite seat at table; and Origen compares the sacred repose of John upon the bosom of the Word to the repose of the Word himself in the bosom of his Father.[22]

It was there, in the silence of recollection, that Jesus consummated the most astounding miracle of love which gives itself. After those first words of St. John, "the Word was made flesh," the most surprising are those which St. John heard Jesus then utter: "Take ye and eat: this is my body; drink: this is my blood." Then all the discourse addressed to the Capharnaites was recalled to his memory. That was "that living bread, that bread from heaven, that bread which giveth life to the world." That was "that flesh, that blood which causes us to live in God, and God to dwell in us." The promise was faithful; the prophecy accomplished, Jesus Christ perpetuated, the incarnation continued, and the mystery of the Lamb of God unveiled to St. John.

At the same time, the intimacy of the Master and of the disciple received its consummation in so profound a union as far to surpass man's imagination. The friend lived on the Friend, man dwelt in God. Scarcely consecrated, the

[20] See Mauduit, *Analys. of the Gospel*, t. iv., dissert. xxxiv., p. 620.

[21] The Greek text has: Ἦν δὲ ἀνακείμενος εἷς ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

[22] "Existimo hoc symbolum denotare Joannem recubuisse in sinibus Verbi Dei, perinde ac ipsum Dei Verbum est in sinibus Patris, juxta illud: Unigenitus qui est in sinu Patris."—Origen, *in Joan.*

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

chalice of divine blood was handed to John; then from his hands it passed to those of his brethren. From the cenacle to the catacombs, from the catacombs to the basilicas, from civilized worlds to barbarous regions, from expiring nations to new-born people, it has been handed down to us. It will in like manner go down to the ends of the earth; it will only stop its course with the consummation of ages. And the wonders of purity, of courage, and of charity which it that day wrought in St. John, it still renews, and will unceasingly reproduce in every thirsting heart which, weary of seeking relief from worldly fountains, shall have courage to come to drink of the chalice of God!

Meanwhile, Jesus suffered. Judas was near him, not far from John, since the perfidious disciple could dip his hand in the same dish as his Master. The Master knew his design; he foresaw his misfortune: that it was which saddened him.

It appears that the belief in the real presence of the Son of God in the Host had already proven a stumbling-block to that unfortunate wretch. When Jesus Christ had promised that divine bread to the Jews of Capharnaum, Judas had been amongst those to whom that saying had been too hard, for his Master had immediately said to his followers: "Have not I chosen you twelve; and one of you is a devil?"[23] It is the characteristic of the Eucharist to make demons where it does not produce angels.

The supper witnessed the accomplishment of the sinister prophecy. With the words of charity were mingled bitter sayings, which revealed the deep wound of Jesus. It was of St. John and of the others that he said: "Ye are clean." But it was of Judas that he added: "But not all!"[24] At table it was of the former that he said: "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen." But it was to

[23] John vi. 71. [24] John xiii. 10

Judas he addressed these words: "But that the Scripture may be fulfilled: He that eateth bread with me, shall lift up his heel against me." [25]

What consternation must have prevailed within the cenacle upon hearing those yet general denunciations, which, naming no one, left hovering over all equally the odious suspicion of perfidy! John remembered it. Placed beside his Master, he had heard the first complaints of Jesus, which the rest, at a greater distance, had not caught, as the sequel shows. Was it not to unburden his grief into his bosom that Jesus had seated him so near his heart? He received that confidence, he adored those merciful advances, he attested one by one that patient pursuit, he wondered that man could resist, and that we bear within ourselves the sad liberty of overcoming, of despising, and of troubling a God.

God was troubled, in fact, as himself attests, like a mother who sees that her remedies are useless, and that she is about to lose her son. It was the closing hour; and that time, addressing himself to all, the Lord Jesus resolved openly to denounce the great crime of one amongst them: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: one of you shall betray me!" [26]

Who was the culprit? The disciples look at one another hesitatingly and questioningly. St. John describes the sudden agitation pervading the cenacle. More troubled than the rest, the Apostle casts himself in terror upon the very bosom of his Master, as if to console him, and to close, were it in his power, the wound made on love. But he alone can relate that sad yet sweet moment.

"Now there was," says he, "leaning upon Jesus's bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

[25] John xiii. 18. [26] John xiii. 21.

"Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: Who is it of whom he speaketh?

"He therefore leaning on the breast of Jesus saith to him: Lord, who is it?

"And then Jesus"—confidentially, still naming no one—"Jesus answered: He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped. And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

"With the morsel, Satan entered into him. That which thou dost, do quickly," recommended to him the merciful Master, as if to prove to him that he knew his designs.

"Judas went out immediately. And it was night. Now no man at the table knew to what purpose he said this unto him."[27]

But could John, who relates it, ignore it? It would seem not. God had confided to him his greatest sorrow. One would say, strange as it may sound, that the divine Friend needed the mortal friend; and that he who had assumed all our infirmities, did not escape that law which, in times of suffering, bows every being, how strong or grand soever he be, towards another creature, frequently weaker than himself, who knows nothing, who can do naught, but who at least can love, who at least can comprehend, can lighten our burden, by assuming his share, and finally can pour over our woes the balm of compassion, a sovereign remedy so powerful that by means of it not unfrequently all sorrow is forgotten, and a man becomes capable of consoling a God.

IV.

When Judas had gone forth, the Lord began a sublime discourse.[28] Nothing further restrained the enthusiasm of

[27] John xiii. 23-28. [28] John xiii.

the soul, which sought to relieve itself fully, and which was oppressed by the presence of the culprit. St. John has consecrated four entire chapters to the sermon of the Last Supper. It is the most admirable portion of the Gospel. No order, no human art has presided over those words, which a God alone could have uttered; but we feel therein the overflow of the great soul which had just given itself entirely in love, and which was on the morrow to sacrifice itself in death. St. John has collected them all, for he then stood, as it were, at the source of divinity; and, from the sublime accent which the words retain in his writings, we perceive that the disciple has just placed his head near the adorable heart of which he receives the echo, and that he is filled with God.

Jesus Christ commences by thanking his Father for the marvellous work which he has just accomplished; and, as formerly God had magnified himself after the creation, so Christ commended himself for the far greater glory which was to reflect from the Eucharist and from the Redemption:

"Jesus said: Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

"If God be glorified in him, God also will glorify him in himself: and immediately will he glorify him."[29]

Here began the adieu, after the thanksgiving. But what divine assurances consoled that farewell! and what assured hopes elevated their eyes towards heaven!

"Little children," said he, "yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek me, but whither I go, you cannot come.

"A new commandment I give unto you: That ye love one another, as I have loved you, . . . that where I am, you also may be.

[29] John xiii. 31.

"Amen, amen, I say unto: He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.

"Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do; that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

"And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever.

"I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you. Because I live, and you shall live also. In that day, you shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you." [30]

Never had nobler words been uttered. Philip wondered thereat, and, believing that heaven was about to open before him, demanded to behold the Father. Jude thought that the hour was come wherein Christ was finally to manifest himself to Israel. Thomas enquired which road the Messiah was to take, and wished to follow him. All clearly saw in that admirable discourse the hymn of his future glory, but they did not comprehend at what price that glory was to be purchased, nor that that thanksgiving was the testament wherein God, dying, set forth the final words of his teaching, his last wishes, and the legacy of his benefits.

His last word regarding himself was that he was the Son of God, absolutely similar and equal to his Father. "Philip," said he, "so long time have I been with you: and have you not known me? He that seeth me, seeth the Father also. Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" "Thomas," said he again, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me." [31]

His last wish was a perpetual commandment of love: "If you love me, keep my commandments; and my Father

[30] John xiv. 12-20. [31] John xiv. 4-9.

will love you, and we will come unto you, and will make our abode with you. A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." [32]

His final legacy, in short, was the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, and who was to teach all things to come. Then, as the sovereign crowning of every gift, a superhuman peace, an intrepid peace in the very midst of storms, a universal peace over individuals and over nations, once they learn to love, a divine peace superior to all that the world can give, a final peace of which no one could deprive us, and which was to be eternal in heaven. What words did the disciples gather up on that evening of ineffaceable remembrance, and what floods of light suddenly descended upon St. John and upon us! [33]

The conversation terminates by a beautiful prayer. Jesus raises his eyes, relates the disciple, he looks towards heaven, and, addressing God:

"Father," says he, "the hour is come, glorify thy Son. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: and now glorify me with the glory which I had, before the world was, with thee. I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world, and they have kept thy word, and they have believed that thou didst send me. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, that they may be one, as we also are. I in them, and thou in me: that they

[32] John xiii. 34, 35; xiv. 15, 23.

[33] "Amid all, consider St. John attaching himself more familiarly to Jesus. See with what love and what attention he gazes at his beloved Master, and gathers up all his words with tender anxiety; for no one save him could so faithfully have transmitted them to us."—St. Bonaventura, *Meditations upon the Life of Jesus Christ*, ch. lxxiii. p. 359.

may be made perfect in one. Father, I will that where I am, they may be with me: that they may see my glory which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world." [34]

Having thus spoken, the Lord disposed himself to die. He perceived the approach of the invisible enemy. "The prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything," said he to his Apostles. "But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I." [35]

The farewell was ended, the voluntary oblation of the holy victim preluded the sacrifice, and the sermon of the cenacle terminated with this cry of heroic courage: "Arise, let us go hence!"

Such is what St. John saw: such is what he relates.[36] The holy humanity, about to burst its envelope, like a vase of pure alabaster, already gave forth the brightness of the interior flame of the soul of Jesus. It was so brilliant that the Apostles owned that they were dazzled thereby: "Behold," said one among them, "now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God." [37]

Could we find elsewhere, in fact, words giving greater evidence of divinity? And at the same time, are they not

[34] John xvii. 1–24.

[35] John xiv. 30, 31.

[36] "Our Lady then said: 'I should like to know what my Son said and did during that supper.' And Peter made a sign to John to relate all to her. John began, and told all. They thus pass the entire day conversing about him. How attentively Magdalen listened, and still more breathlessly Our Lady! How often did she say during that recital: 'Blessed be my son Jesus!'"—St. Bonaventure, *Medit. on Life of Christ*, ch. lxxxv.

[37] John xvi. 29, 30. "And, however, it is of this discourse that some have dared say: 'The prayer uttered by Jesus, the eve of his death, is transformed in St. John into a long, wordy, cold discourse, filled solely with ideas of his divine greatness.'"—Bretschneider.

overflowing with those treasures of humanity and of benignity which the Apostle declares to have seen in the bosom of the Saviour? However, there is nothing therein arguing the display of prearranged eloquence, as in the dialogue of Socrates while expiring. It was a simple, familiar, confidential conversation of a father with his sons, of a friend with his intimates, in the silence of a last night, and in the privacy of a religious supper. Peter there utters his eager and presumptuous promises, Thomas makes known his doubts, Philip declares his wishes, Jude his hopes; one might call it a catechism. And yet no word could describe the elevation of that instruction. We hear it, we adore it, it vibrates through the whole being, as if it had just fallen from the lips of the Lord; we plunge into that abyss, we return there unceasingly, as to those venerated letters wherein a dying hand has traced its final lines to us. It throws us into that transport which led Bossuet to exclaim: "I can bear no more, Lord, I can bear no more!" These words alone would suffice to people a solitude and to fill a life, since they alone have power sufficient to transform the world. And I am myself astonished that we can read, listen to, and enjoy aught else on the evening of all communions, at the feet of all Calvaries, in all thanksgivings, in face of all sacrifice, when all else disappears, and that we can hear aught save two immortal voices, that of the soul which says to God, "Lord, show me the way!" and that of God which answers, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life!"

CHAPTER VII.

ST. JOHN AT THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

I.

AFTER the hymn of thanksgiving, having given the signal of quitting the cenacle, Jesus Christ proceeded towards the Mount of Olives, whither he was accustomed to go at night to pray.

It was during that walk that he held with his disciples a portion of the discourse which St. John has handed down to us, and of which he clearly points out the place and the circumstances. They moved along together on a night sadly yet pleasantly lighted by the Paschal moon. And, as they crossed the vineyards, where, in that country, the vines grow like great shrubs, Jesus, as usual, borrowed from nature which lay before his eyes imagery calculated to represent his teaching. "I am," he said to them, "the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. I am the vine; ye are the branches. Whosoever abideth in me, the same beareth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing."[1] This was still the doctrine of the kingdom of God, such as we find it throughout the Gospel of St. John.

Thus they arrived, always according to St. John, at the foot of the mountain in a stony place, wherein history and prophecy argue in locating the scene of their fears. It was the bed of the brook Cedron, formed in the valley primi-

[1] John xv. 1 5.

tively styled Tophet or Ben-Hinnom, since named the Valley of Josaphat. The name of Cedron in Hebrew signifies darkness; and nothing is, in fact, more sombre than the ravine, most generally dry, above which winds a narrow road which seems suspended over the precipice. Thence it was that Leviticus prescribed to hurl the scape-goat, which, falling afterwards from the top of the rocks of Zug, has to atone for the nation. David had likewise crossed the Cedron when he fled before the rebellious Absalom. Beyond, the road widened and led to the spot styled Gethsemani. It is St. John whose faithful memory makes us acquainted with that road along which he had so often followed his Master.[2] On one side, the heights which bore the tombs of kings and the walls of the holy city; on the other, the mountain from whose summit Jesus was to reascend to heaven, overlook the garden wherein the Lord was to begin to suffer.

He did not suffer alone; his friend was faithful to him.[3] And as the Church has given the name of Compassion to the sufferings which Mary endured at the sight of the Passion of her Son, we will style by the same appellation the sorrow of the friend, and we will relate the Compassion of St. John.

We must distinguish two passions of Jesus Christ. There is the passion of His body, there is that of his heart.

To be bound, to be spit upon, to be beaten with rods and crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross and pierced by a lance, are the sufferings of the body.

[2] John xviii. 1.

[3] "St. John, having placed himself near Jesus at the supper, never more quitted him. No one, in fact, ever attached himself more faithfully and more closely to Jesus. And when the Lord was taken he entered with him into the *Atrium* of the chief-priest, and abandoned him neither at his crucifixion nor at his death, nor even after his death, until he had been duly buried."—St. Bonaventure, *Life of Jesus Christ*, ch. lxxiii.

Horrible as we may imagine it, that is not the torture which most affects generous souls. They courageously brave it, sometimes even joyously, and our crucified God has himself declared that those were not the most to be dreaded who only kill the body.

But to be sold by his familiar friend, to have selected men to be his companions, his heirs, and his brethren, and to find himself suddenly denied by the first among them, abandoned by the rest; successively to endure the kiss of hypocrisy, the arrow of ingratitude, solitude, and desertion; to undergo by turns the cowardice of the former, the ambitious venality of the latter, the immodesty of a court, and the insolent stupidity of the multitude; in short, to be good, to be holy, to be a saviour, to be a shepherd, to be a father, to be a God, and, notwithstanding all that, and even because of all that, to be the victim of those whom he came to redeem; to have quitted heaven to enfranchise the earth, then to suffer and to die forsaken by heaven and earth, such is the passion of the heart.

That was principally the torment of Jesus Christ. All his passion, truly and perfectly understood, passed between the moment wherein his breaking heart sweated blood and water in the garden of the agony, and the instant wherein that same heart, pierced by a lance, again shed blood and water from its wound. John's friendship comprehends it; and as that divine heart received three great shocks at the time of his passion—the first at the Garden of Gethsemani by the flight of his brethren, the second at the house of Caiphas by the denial of Peter, the third on the cross by the abandonment of all—the beloved disciple takes his place near him in each one of his sorrows, to solace him by his compassion if he cannot make of it a rampart.

Jesus had arrived at Gethsemani, followed by his apostles. They were then eleven in number, but he selected

three only from among them—namely, Peter, James, and John, the same who had accompanied him to the mountain whereon he had lately been transfigured. However, the three apostles did not follow him to the end; he ordered them to await him under the olive-trees, and he withdrew alone for his final agony, begging them merely to solace his mortal sadness by the aid of their prayers.[4]

It is especially at such times that friendship is the most indispensable of all blessings. God even sought its helpful sweetness; he returned again and again to his apostles. But the apostles slept, and John, the well-beloved, slumbered like the others.

The Gospel does not wish us to condemn that sleep. As it explains to us, it was excessive sorrow which caused them to slumber, like those wearied sons beside the bed of their father, who end by sinking into a species of drowsiness wherein the soul still watches and reproduces the image of her grief: *Dormientes erant præ tristitia.*

Jesus Christ, likewise, does not blame them; he rather pities them, for he knew what woe overwhelmed them: "The spirit is willing; but the flesh is weak," and yields.

We love faithfully, we believe sincerely, and we frame of our devotion and our fidelity an enchanting picture: *Spiritus enim promptus est.* But quickly, alas! poor nature resumes her sway. Patience succumbs, health fails, imagination becomes clouded, fervor dies away, the eyes grow heavy with grief and weariness: *oculi eorum erant gravati.* And we are surprised by sleep after the most sincere pro-

[4] "Cæteros sedere jussi ut infirmiores; vos ut firmiores volo collaborare mecum in vigiliis et arctionibus."—Origen, *in Joan.* St. John does not himself relate the agony of his Master in the Garden of Olives. But he plainly represents him, in the moment preceding, overcome with fatigue and with sorrow: "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause I came unto this hour" (John xii. 27). Is that not the echo of the groans of Gethsemani?

testations to be watchful, to combat, and to endure: "Who will deliver me from this body of death!"

"Watch, therefore, and pray," repeated their Master. Firstly, they must watch, and keep their eyes open, and beware of stratagems, for it is the hour of darkness, as Jesus said, and the snares of eloquence are not wanting under the feet of the disciples of the God whose death they seek to compass. Then they must pray when the world conspires. Men of prayer alone can redeem the earth if it will be redeemed. And if, on the contrary, it be necessary that the Son of man drink the chalice and shed his sweat of water and of blood, he will be consoled because his faithful ones will, like angels, have visited him in his agony, and thereby have comforted his heart.

There is another duty: that of action. "Now rise," said Jesus to his disciples, "let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray me." It is now no longer a question of watchfulness and of prayer, but of valiant action. John rises; his divine Master is seized by the servants of the high-priest. The Apostle is there, he sees all, all the details of the scene are due to his pen. He describes the arrival of that vile troop armed with staves and with torches. He beheld the miracle of the soldiers overthrown by one word of the Man-God. The companion of St. Peter, he attests his armed resistance against Malchus; he has specially noticed the merciful words by which the Lord pleaded for the security of his disciples. That is mentioned only by St. John.[6] But will the faithful Apostle now prove wanting? Eleven followed Jesus to the foot of the hill, and three into the garden. How many amongst them will accompany him into the presence of his persecutors?

[6] John xviii. 8.

II.

"Jesus was followed," as St. John himself relates, "by Simon, surnamed Peter, and *another disciple.* And that disciple was known to the high-priest, and went in *with Jesus* into the court of the high-priest.

"But Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple therefore, who was known to the high-priest, went out, and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter." [6]

Now the disciple, the other disciple whom we are accustomed to see with Peter, *pre-eminently the disciple*, he who always gives himself that name in his Gospel, he who never makes himself known in any other manner, who is he but St. John? This fact was insisted upon by St. Chrysostom preaching to the faithful of Antioch. Then the eloquent bishop furnished the proof thereof, noticing the presence of St. John upon the spot, explaining his silence, praising his discretion, pointing him out under those hidden terms, yet always transparent, which preserve at once the truth of history and the modesty of the witness.[7] It is thus, he explains, that later those same priests of the house of Caiphas, meeting Peter and John who preach in the Temple, remember, in fact, "to have seen those men with Jesus." [8] St.

[6] John xviii. 15, 16. "Cur non Petrum ipse Joannes introduxit? Christo hærebat et sequebatur eum."—S. Chrysostom, *in hunc locum Joan.*, *Homil.* lxxxiii.

[7] "Quis est alius discipulus? Ipse est qui hæc scripsit. (Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄλλος μθηας; Αὐτὸς ὁ ταῦτα γράψας.) Et cur se non nominat? Nam cum supra pectus Jesu recubuit, jure nomen occultat. Nunc autem cur idipsum facit? Eadem de causa. Nam hic quoque rem præclaram narrat quod nempe, omnibus aufugientibus, ipse sequeretur. Ideo nomen tacet suum, et Petrum priorem ponit, suique tamen meminisse coactus est, ut ediscas eum accuratius ea quæ in aula gesta sunt enarrasse, utpote qui intus esset," etc.—S Chrysost. *in Joan. Homil.* lxxxiii. al. lxxxii. apud edit. Migne, t viii. p. 449.

[8] S. Chrysost. *in Acta Apostol. Homil.* x.

Jerome likewise so understands it. St. Augustine also teaches it to the Christians of Hippo. Theophylactes raises no doubt as to that sense.[9] Who could doubt it, having the slightest knowledge of the style and of the heart of St. John?

John, then, is there. He arrived the first; he would not quit his Master one single instant; anterior relations which he merely mentions, but does not explain, gave him the *entrée* of the house of Caiphas; he penetrates into the atrium; he does not conceal his identity, nor whom he loves. He is a disciple of Jesus, every one knows it; the portress seems to allude to that first entrance when she asks Peter, "Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?"[10] The door which is open to him he will open to others. He speaks to the servants of Caiphas, and introduces Simon Peter. His friends must be there, as a protestation, as a consolation, as a mediation between the Just Man persecuted and his persecutors. Jesus must be enabled to say to the unworthy pontiffs: "Why do you ask me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them. Behold them, they know what things I have said: *Ecce, hi sciunt, quæ dixerim ego.*"[11] It is requisite that shortly, when his heart will suffer from denial of Peter, that he have near him the faithful disciple upon whom he can at least rest his weary eyes. That was the prerogative of St. John, and in the continuous history of the combats of the Church we love to behold him heading the long train which, during

[9] "Quisnam sit ille discipulus? Solet autem se idem Joannes ita significare, et addere quem diligebat Jesus."—S. Aug. *in Joan. Evang. Tract.* cxiii. col. 786. "Jesus amabat Joannem plurimum qui, propter nobilitatem erat notus Pontifici, et Judæorum insidias non timebat, in tantum ut Petrum introduceret in atrium, et staret solus apostolorum ante crucem."—S. Hieronym., *Epistol.* xvi. p. 119, *ad Principiam, de Marcellæ epitaphio.*

[10] John xviii. 17, 25. "Illud autem *Numquid et tu* ideo dicit mulier quia Joannes intus erat."—S. Chrysost. *in Joan. Homil.* lxxxiii.

[11] John xviii. 21.

three hundred years, will defile past the servants and the tribunals of persecuting powers, uttering the intrepid testimony of faith, "I am a Christian!"

What especially struck John in the Passion of his Master, such as he saw it accomplished under his eyes, was the character of spontaneity wherewith Jesus made that generous immolation of himself. He had declared from the beginning: "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me: but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father."[12]

Having made that manifesto of his sovereignty, and of his free election to live or to die, he remains constant thereto until his latest breath. Excepting the hour of agony in the Garden of Olives, it was not merely with the thrill of hope that he saluted his death; he chose himself to command his decease, foreseeing all, predicting all, in the full possession of a soul mistress of herself and of her destiny. Already St. John had beheld him enter upon that road, he walked onward therein at the head of his followers, he marked the route by regular halting-places, he had bade adieu to heaven and to earth, and when his hour was come, it was he, it was the betrayed, who warned the traitor to go forth and to complete his work, and to do it quickly. Master of his executioners, he overthrew them immediately he named himself to them, placing himself in their hands only after having made them aware of his freedom and of the choice of his love. Master of his judge himself, when the procurator dared say to that God, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee?" "No," immediately replied the voluntary victim; "thou shouldst not have any power against me,

[12] John x. 17.

unless it were given thee from above."[13] Finally, he will remain Master of death itself; and when, having already taken earnest of him, by exhausting his blood, it will prepare to strike the final blow, it will suddenly pause, until, having quietly revolved the Scriptures to assure himself that all was accomplished, it pleases the sovereign Master to give it the signal, but with a powerful cry which still argues his liberty and his existing life.

Thus, to the view of St. John, his Master did not succumb: he offered himself; he was not the executed criminal, he was the Redeemer; he was not only the victim, he was the priest, and that priest was God: *Ecce Agnus Dei!*

However, after having shown himself near Jesus in the atrium of Caiphas, up to the moment of the crucifixion, the Apostle no more appears in the Passion of his Master. What had become of him? When, turning, the Lord transpierced with his divine look the guilty soul of Peter, what glance did he cast upon the faithful Apostle? What price did he bestow upon his generosity? And whilst Simon Peter quitted the house of Caiphas, weeping ceaseless tears over his great misfortune, whither went St. John?

The Gospel does not inform us. Catholic tradition, putting the like question, deems that, at that hour, the two similar sorrows of the beloved Apostle and of the Mother of God could not remain separated from each other, and it represents St. John as going to rejoin and to console Mary.

St. Bonaventure writes: "Meanwhile, John repairs to Our Lady and to her companions, who were assembled in the house where the Supper had been celebrated, and he relates to them all that had happened to the Lord and to

[13] John xix. 10.

the disciples. Then burst forth ineffable sighs, lamentations, and cries. Our Lady prayed with her whole soul and all her strength, in the profound bitterness of her heart." [14]

Was that so? I know not. But in the history of a saint who was so large-hearted, we should not despise, when they are noble and dignified, those conjectures which are the second sight of love. They can assume their place, below the Gospel undoubtedly, below history, in the completion of this wonderful figure. Then iconography comes likewise to lend them beauty and life. And thus it is that, in view of the silence of Scripture upon that point, one loves to contemplate and to interrogate the picture wherein a great artist of our own day has portrayed that scene of sorrow:

A Jewish house, possibly the cenacle wherein Jesus had just predicted his death, fronts upon the street leading to Calvary. Through an open window, which dimly lights that dwelling, we see passing the pikes, the Roman ensigns, and the instrument of punishment—as also the victim. At the end of the hall, in the shadow, the holy women kneeling, covered with long veils, scarcely dare turn their eyes towards that cortége, whose blasphemies and the clash of whose arms are distinctly audible to them. In the centre, alone, with an expression of incomparable grief, Mary is kneeling, her hands clasped, the light falling upon her face, and, as it were, enveloping it in a funereal nimbus, her eyes, her forehead, her mouth, all her senses, all her being, straining towards the divine and invisible object whose presence ravishes her in ecstasy. Then, near the entrance, is a group apart. In the foreground, a young woman, wild with sorrow, prostrated in the dust, her face veiled by her dishevelled hair: it is Magdalen. Finally,

[14] *Meditations upon the Life of Christ*, ch. lxxv.

above her, and near the window, stand two disciples. The first is Simon Peter, the harsh-featured fisherman, casting an indignant glance upon the multitude, with one hand making an angry gesture against the executioners, perhaps against himself, and with the other restraining the movement of a youth who strives to rush forward along the road of the cross. That young man is St. John. He has recognized his Master, and he extends towards him his arms like wings. We realize that nothing will hinder him, and that in a moment he will be upon Calvary.[15]

III.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen.

"When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son.

"After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.

"And Jesus knew that all things were accomplished."[16]

It was the consummation of fidelity on the part of St. John. The passion of the Man-God, the passion of his heart had then entered upon its final phase. Abandoned by men, he further complained of being forsaken by his Father: *Eloi! Eloi! lamma sabacthani!* John does not leave him. Vainly does the firmament shroud itself in darkness, the earth quake as if to shake from her surface the accursed victim, and the tombs yawn of their own accord as if under the pressure of sacred terror: alone,

[15] See the admirable painting of Good Friday, by Paul Delaroche.

[16] John xix. 25-28.

amongst all, the friend of Jesus persists in believing and in loving. "Love," says the Scripture, "is strong as death."

It was the consummation of munificence on the part of God. "But what could he bestow," demands Bossuet, "naked, despoiled as he is, poor slave who has naught in his possession whereof he may dispose by will? Whichever side he turns his eyes, Jesus sees nothing more which belongs to him. I am mistaken, he beholds Mary and St. John, who are there to say to him: 'We are thine!' Behold all that remains to him, he gives one to the other: 'O John! I give you Mary, and at the same time I give you to Mary.' . . . Mary belongs to St. John, and John belongs to Mary. . . . He who turns all hearts as it pleases him, and whose word is all-powerful and operates within them all that he says to them, he makes Mary mother of John, and John son of Mary. Whatever tender and respectful love Jesus bore his mother will live in the heart of St. John." [17] "We must not, therefore, style St. John merely the disciple," says Theophylactus, "he is the brother of Jesus; so good it is to stand at the foot of the cross, and to remain with Jesus Christ when he suffers!" [18]

But the divine legacy did not stop at the disciple. It was addressed to the world, and, under the name of St. John embracing the entire Church, it appointed a mother to the family of souls whose Father is in heaven. John is the first-born of that adopted family which will number so many children; and when, at all points of the Christian earth, we shall see flourish filial piety towards the Mother of God, from which spring so many virginal graces and

[17] Bossuet, *Panegyric of St. John*, Part II.

[18] "Jam papæ! quomodo honorat discipulum fratrem suum illum faciens! Usque adeo bonum est juxta crucem stare et manere apud patientem Jesum: βαθαὶ δέ πως ἐτίμα τὸν μαθητήν, ἀδελφὸν ἑαυτοῦ τοῦτον ποιούμενος, κ. τ. λ.—Theophylact. *in hunc locum Joan.*

such great virtues, it is to John that we look back to find its germ. Then we shall clearly see, notwithstanding the excesses or the mollifications which may occasionally be introduced therein by human error, that it is not the worship of weak minds and of dreamy souls, since it was implanted by Jesus Christ himself in the great heart of John, that it has its root beside the Cross, and that, born among thorns, that lily was watered by the tears of the Mother of God and by the blood of her Son.

Meanwhile the disciple—and this is the testimony whereon he insists—remained there unto the end for a far greater mystery. "A soldier came," says he, "and with his spear opened the side of Jesus, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony: and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true; that you also may believe." [19]

St. John was there to collect that blood. That was his office. Yesterday that blood was bequeathed to us by the gift of the chalice; but now that the legacy, if I may dare so to speak, flows in streams from the altar of sacrifice, who shall receive it to transmit it to men and to water therewith the purified world? The wealthy of the earth have a chosen friend whom they name, in order that through him their inheritance reaches their children intact. Who will then be selected to become the testamentary executor of God? Mary, indeed, is there, at the foot of that altar, whence she gathers all the sorrow for herself, all the graces for us. But the celestial mediatrix of grace is not its minister, and it is the order of God that from her hands it descends into those of a man, thereby to reach mankind.

That man will be the priest, and the priest here has his model in St. John. Such is the order of salvation and the hierarchy in the service of souls. Not a drop of blood

[19] John xix. 32-35.

shall fall from an altar, not a grace shall flow from a divine sacrament, without passing previously through the heart of Mary and by the hands of the priest. Thus the cross planted on earth, near heaven; upon that cross, Jesus; at the feet of Jesus, Mary; beside Mary, St. John; in St. John, the priesthood; then below, in the valley, the multitude raising their eyes towards the mountain whence help should come to them: there could be no grander figure of the redemption and of his ministry.

Therefore it was that Jesus then saw that all was consummated and that he might die; for there was near him the holy generation which was to perpetuate him, to raise him to life within souls, and to cause him to survive forever in the world.

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. JOHN AT THE RESURRECTION.

I.

THE remembrances of John suddenly transport us three days thence. It is the dawn of the great day. Witness of the last instants of the passion and of the burial of Jesus, John is also the first informed of the news of the resurrection. He had retired to a house in Jerusalem, probably his own, as St. Luke hints, that wherein he offered an asylum to the Mother of God, that which Nicephorus and other historians locate upon the hill of Sion. Peter is there with him overwhelmed with remorse.[1]

It is there that John feels the first presentiment of some mysterious occurrence. Thus his recital opens:[2] On Sun-

[1] The Gospel supposes it: Mary Magdalen finds John and Peter together in the same place (xx. 2). St. Bonaventure adds in his *Meditations:* "Some one knocks at the door. The holy women tremble. John goes to open it, and, looking out, he recognizes Peter, and says: 'It is Peter.' Our Lady answers: 'Suffer him to enter.' Then Peter enters respectfully, weeping and sobbing, and all present join their tears to his; and they can utter no word because of their grief." (*Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ch. lxxxiv.)

[2] "All proves that we possess, in the fourth Gospel, the account of an eye witness. Compare what relates to Mary Magdalen in St. Matthew and in St. John. In the first Gospel all is stated without precision. In the fourth, all is successive and co-ordinate. So it is with regard to the apparitions of Jesus at Jerusalem. In St. Luke they are reunited in one only, which immediately precedes the Ascension. In Matthew, who gives Galilee as the sole theatre of the resurrection, mention is made of the incredulity of the disciples (ch. xxviii. 17), but that concise remark requires as commentary the account of the unbelief of Thomas."—De Pressensé, *Jesus Christ, his Life, etc.*, p. 660.

day morning a woman from among the disciples hurriedly enters. It is Mary Magdalen, who rushes up to him, saying: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."[3]

What did that portend? What had that woman related? And what had she seen?

That morning some of the Galilean women, amongst whom the gospel names Mary, mother of James the Less or the Just; Salome, mother of John; Joanna, wife of Chusa, of the house of Herod, had repaired at an early hour to the sepulchre of Jesus. It lay in the midst of a species of garden situated upon the slope of the mountain of Calvary itself, and hewn in the rock, such as we still see the tombs of the elders and of the kings of Judea. That sepulchral grotto and that garden belonged to a Jew of distinction, Joseph of Arimathea, who, aided by Nicodemus, had deposited therein the corpse of the divine Master, having previously, after the manner of the East, wrapped it in fine linen and surrounded it with spices. But that hasty embalmment, hurriedly prepared in the bustle of the eve of the Sabbath, was insufficient. It was, therefore, in order to finish that work of final piety that the holy women had forestalled the light, bearing with them vases filled with aromatics, but anxiously enquiring one of the other who would roll away for them the large stone closing the sepulchre.

Magdalen, the most ardent, had preceded them. It was yet night when she arrived alone at the garden, near the grotto; and her first thought had been to rush to the entrance of the sacred spot where lay the body of her adored Master. . . . The stone was no longer there![4] At that sight Magdalen is troubled; she at first dreads a profanation; she dared not penetrate into that darkness;

[3] John xx. 2. [4] John xx. 1.

and, awaiting no one, dismayed and wild with grief, she hastens to the house where Simon Peter and John had sought refuge, to inform them of her fears: "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him."

Friendly alarms, which believe all to be lost, at the very moment when it is about to be discovered! The emotion of Magdalen found its echo in the heart of St. John. There was as yet no question of the resurrection; no one even thought of it. Only at the first words of the grief-stricken Magdalen the two apostles were deeply affected. But John alone can depict to us his anxiety and his eagerness:

"Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple whom Jesus loved, and they came to the sepulchre.

"And they both ran together, and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

"And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying: but yet he went not in.

"Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying.

"And the napkin that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place.

"Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw, and believed.

"For as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead."[5]

Behold the nearest, the best informed, and the most circumstantial witness; behold the first believer in the resurrection. "He saw and he believed," relates he of himself. And what led him to believe? The scripture in the first place, the express promises of the Saviour, which, as he seems then to insinuate, were more familiar to

[5] John xx. 3-9.

him than to the other brethren: *Nondum enim sciebant.* Then, as he again says, having beheld closely the napkin, which had enveloped the wounded head of the Master, so carefully folded beside the winding-sheet, must he not have concluded that the body of Jesus had not been carried off? It was then, therefore, that his eyes were opened, and he immediately believed, through those superior reasons which are the sudden and sure intuitions of the heart. The heart is always foremost in the ways of God, and quickly arrives at the understanding of things. Peter was still running when John had already arrived, had seen, and had believed. Thus faith is itself also an affair of soul, and the shortest road to attain to belief is to love.

John had returned home in company with Peter.[6] Day had then dawned, and they remained together in the same house, divided between hope and fear, when they again saw Magdalen coming towards them. She is no longer the same woman; her face is radiant, her words are fervid. John has noted them down, and how faithfully he repeats them to us! Magdalen remained weeping near the monument which she had not quitted, unable to tear herself from that sorrowful yet sweet spot; when, as day was breaking, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. Two figures clad in white suddenly appear to her: they are two angels, they console her, and say to her gently: "Woman, why weepest thou?" Magdalen has but one thought, she claims her Master: "I know not where they have laid him," she says. But turning, she perceives the Lord behind her. He is standing as if awaiting her; but, blinded by her tears, she does not recognize him, she takes him for the gardener, and of him likewise she demands her Master. That was sufficient trial of her constancy. The latter says but one word in reply: *Mary!* but that was

[6] John xx. 10.

her honorary name, her restored title, and the watchword of her heart. She has finally recognized him; it is the Master: *Rabboni!* She says nothing more, and casts herself at the feet which she would adore.

But the glorified Lord demands another sort of worship: "Touch me not," says he, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father." That was the order and the prelude of that adoration in spirit and in truth already previously laid down in St. John. It was the era of the invisible Christ which succeeded to that of the visible Christ, whose feet might be bathed with tears and with perfumes. That we can no longer perform. Undoubtedly, the Eucharist will restore us the sweetness of that divine commerce. No doubt, when he shall have reascended to his Father, we shall still recognize him, shall still find him in the breaking of bread. Does he not seem to indicate that as the consolation and the hope of the future: *Nondum ascendi?* But the sacrament which restores to us the presence of the Master does not restore to us the visible sight of him, which we shall enjoy only in heaven. Jesus, therefore, raises the eyes of Magdalen towards the heaven whither he is to repair, and he sends her forthwith to relate to her brethren all that she has just seen.[7]

It was John's eye which had had the first intuition of the mystery. Magdalen's gaze next penetrated it; but what delicate shades between those two testimonies! That of John was more prompt, that of Magdalen was surer. The former requires merely a look to produce instant belief, the latter needs words and apparitions. Both eagerly hasten thither: all love has wings. But John needs to remain but an instant; Magdalen must stay long beside the tomb. John surmises; Magdalen seeks. But one does not long seek Jesus Christ when one loves, and both meet him in

[7] John xx. 11–18.

the bosom of his triumph, as they had followed him to the place of execution.

Such are the morrows which God reserves to his faithful. There are ever two diversities amongst them over whom he unceasingly, in this world, extends the two arms of his bloody or glorious cross—namely, repentance and innocence—over Magdalen and John. He forgives much to the former; the other is the beloved disciple. Both have their privileged places near him in the great hours of life. Only repentance remains lower down, at his feet, which it seeks humbly to kiss; while innocence reposes upon his heart.

But that double testimony was not sufficient for the faith of the future. John owed us another. Those who doubt are more numerous than those who believe. The Apostles were incredulous. Magdalen vainly gave them all the signs, her companions fruitlessly confirmed her depositions by their own experience: those were but the reveries of delirious women, "but idle tales";[8] and those persons who were accused of having imagined a resurrection would not even put faith in that which was demonstrated to them.

Men even in the beginning met with no more credit. Simon Peter had first been convinced by a personal apparition of Jesus, mentioned in the Gospel of St. Luke and in the Epistles of St. Paul. The same Apostle speaks of another apparition to James the Less. The disciples of Emmaus had recognized the Lord in the breaking of bread. Those were isolated facts. Those who heard the recital were affected and astonished, but did not yield. God chose that the miracle should not readily obtain belief amongst men, even the best of men, in order that it might be proven that he

[8] Luke xxiv. 11.

had, as it were, extorted it by the striking force of evidence. John, impressed by that evidence, established the contradictory fact, opposing to the eager faith of Magdalen the obstinate incredulity of Thomas. There it is no longer a personal apparition; it is the body of Apostles assembled in the very place where Jesus manifests himself. It is no longer John who believes, it is Didymus; it is he who would yield only before a palpable proof, and who, having, in fact, handled and touched with his finger, ends by falling on his knees before "his Lord and his God."[9]

Such were the most vivid souvenirs of St. John. "And that we declare unto you," he was later to write at the head of his Epistles, "is that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of that Word of Life which was from the beginning in the Father."[10] And whoever reads, he causes also to touch those events, whose imprint remains immortal in his Gospel, as it ever remained verdant within his heart.

II.

"Go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee: there they shall see me." Thus the Lord had spoken to Magdalen, the day of his resurrection. St. Matthew and St. Mark mention that rendezvous; but St. John alone relates it, and it is there, in Galilee, in his beloved country, that he saw the crowning of the renewed life of the Conqueror of death.

The cenacle and the sepulchre are already in the distance. The Apostles have returned to their lake, awaiting their mission, undecided as to their work, filled with fear

[9] John xxi, 24, and sequel. [10] 1 John i. 1.

and with hope, having once more become fishers of fish, after having been consecrated fishers of men.[11]

One day, therefore, they were fishing. There were, besides John and James, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, and two other disciples. The night's labor had been unsuccessful, and the fishermen were returning, having taken nothing, when in the morning, just as they neared the shore, in the faint light of dawn, they perceived some one awaiting them upon the bank, who saluted them with apparent familiarity. "Children," said he to them, "have you any meat?"[12] Then the stranger told them to cast the net on the side he indicated, and they immediately drew a multitude of fish.

But who performed that miracle? Who was that good and powerful stranger? Who will recognize him? "It is the Lord," said a disciple. The first who distinguishes him at a glance is John; and, as if to furnish us with the reason, he himself adds that it "was the disciple whom Jesus loved."[13] "Those who love one another, and resemble one another," says the Venerable Bede, "readily recognize one another, merely through sympathy and mutual similarity."[14] "What!" exclaims St. Augustine, "thou lovest and thou dost not see? Does not love bestow sight? Persevere in love, and I will never deceive it. For I have purified thy heart; and wherefore have I purified it, if not to enable thee to see?"[15] "It was virginity," adds St. Ambrose, "which was the first to recognize that virginal body. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God!"[16]

[11] "Non ii fuere prohibiti arte sua, licita scilicet atque concessa, victum necessarium sibi quærere, sui Apostolatus integritate servata, si quando unde viverent illud non haberent."—S. Aug. *in Joan. Tract.* cxxii. col. 810.

[12] John xxi. 5. [13] John xxi. 7.

[14] "Solent similes, ideoque amantes se invicem ex quadam sympathia et vultus, gestuumque similitudine agnoscere."—Bede, *in Joan.*

[15] S. Aug., *in Joan. Tract.* xxi. col. 1573.

[16] "Decebat revera ut Virginitas virginale corpus prius agnosceret."

Love had its reward. That very day, Jesus Christ had just confided to Peter the care of his flock; he had likewise promised him his cross, predicting to him at the same time the honor of a death like unto his own: "*Tu me sequere*"—"Thou shalt follow me!" But regarding the destiny of John the Lord said nothing. Peter, says St. Chrysostom, who had thitherto shared with the disciple good and evil fortune, would willingly have his friend still participate with him in his promised blessings.[17] Turning, therefore, and perceiving him who had lain upon his Master's bosom, Peter asked: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Inseparable in life, are we to be divided in death? Shall we be disunited in glory? Or, having caused him lately to repose upon your breast, can you condemn so dear a head?

Then the Lord made that mysterious but decisive answer, which furnished the key to the destiny of John and of his future life: "So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Can he not follow me without accompanying thee? *Quid ad te? Tu me sequere!*"

Those were the last special personal words addressed to the two great apostles. They extended, in fact, to the term of their natural life, unto that day whereon the Master *was to come*, as he expressed it; whereon he was to come to Peter upon the Appian Way, to demand of him to go to die upon the Janiculum; whereon he was to come to John in the visions of Patmos, then later at Ephesus, to bear him away into the bosom of the Divinity which had already so frequently appeared to him. The office of the two Apostles had been clearly pointed out by those words. Peter was to inaugurate, at the head of the church, those combats

[17] "Quia magna ei prædixerat Dominus, et orbem terrarum commiserat, et martyrium prænuntiaverat, et amorem testatus est ampliorem, volens et Joannem communicatorem accipere dixit: 'Hic autem quid? Nonne eadem nobiscum veniet via?'"—St. Chrysost., *in Joan. Homil.* lxxxviii.

wherein the brethren were all, like Jesus, to triumph in dying; whilst, sole survivor of the Apostolic family, St. John was to bear aloft, amid nations unto the ends of the world, that sign of charity of which it is written that it never faileth: *Caritas nunquam excidit.*

A repast, taken in common, upon the shore of the lake, consecrated that solemn visit of Jesus. "It was during a repast," remarks St. Augustine, "that the Lord had first manifested his glory. Another meal, the Supper, had been the revelation of his love. What symbolized that final repast of the risen God, whereby St. John terminates his Gospel, if not the great festival of Beatitude, whereunto we are bidden by the spouse of the eternal nuptials?" [18]

One of the most ancient Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, adds that Jesus Christ, during the days following his resurrection, conferred another gift upon his beloved disciple, that of eminent science, which was to render him the eagle of the Evangelists.[19] Is that a tradition, or is it the explanation of the sublime transcendence of the genius of St. John? We have no report of the conversations which took place between the glorious Master, already filled with heaven, and the disciple who had followed him to the cross. But if such discourses have not reached us, their reflection still shines in the Holy Gospel.

Thus John was the most considerable witness, as well as the most circumstantial historian, of the resurrection. Whilst amongst the others the divine victor over death appears in the horizon merely as a splendid but fleeting meteor, in the Gospel of St. John he lives, he speaks, he loves, he begins another existence upon earth to complete it in heaven.

[18] S. Aug., *in Joan. Tract.* CXXIV. cap. XXI. col. 1965 et seq.

[19] Clemens Alexandr. *in Sexto Instit. libro.* Apud Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* lib. ii. cap. i. p. 38: Ἰωάννῃ, μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν, παρέδωκε τὴν γνῶσιν ὁ Κύριος.

And what an existence—compassionate and good as becomes a man, powerful and transfigured as befits a God! What tenderness, in the first place! What familiarity! What charming surprises! What fatherly words in those endless adieux which precede the departure! How evidently it is his delight to be with the children of men! He cannot quit them, he everywhere rejoins them; here in the cenacle, there upon the sea-shore, in the midst of their work, at the hour of their meals, on the road to the city. "Why are you troubled?" he enquires of the latter. "Fear not," he says gently to the former, "Peace be to you! Peace be to you!" They are no longer his followers, the very name of friend is not enough for him, thenceforth they are his sons, his children: "Children—*Pueri*—have you any meat?" The excess of condescension sometimes goes to the extent of apparently compromising respect: "Thomas, put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side." Then when he sees him kneeling, gently raising him: "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and have believed." [20]

As was the case formerly with Joseph when he once again beheld his brethren, he will not even remember that they had forsaken him. Amongst all his faithful ones there is a sinner, and it is to that woman that Jesus first shows himself: "Mary! Rabboni!" Amongst those twelve Apostles there is a renegade: Jesus appears to Peter before the rest of the brethren: *Apparuit Simoni!*—it is his bark he enters, it is his net that he favors. There is not even question of his apostasy. And when Peter, remembering his ingratitude, remains confounded by such clemency, then it is that God calls him to become the shepherd and the prince of his people. "Peter, lovest thou me?

[20] John xx. 27-29.

lovest thou me?" And, having made the thrice guilty apostle pronounce the triple protestation of his fidelity, he delivers over to him in a few words all his best possessions: his flock and his cross, the supreme apostolate with the sacrifice, the crown of the Pontiff, allowing a glimpse above of the crown of martyrdom which will never more depart from the succession of St. Peter: *Alius cinget te.*

Thus the soul of Jesus palpitates in St. John. He has felt the tremor and overflow of life within the bosom of the Son of man, but he has likewise witnessed the definitive work of the power of God.

It is primarily peace signed between heaven and earth, and their alliance written in those glorified wounds which Jesus, Mediator, is about to bear toward the Father. "Peace be to you! Peace be to you! And having thus spoken he showed them his hands and his side."[21]

It is the hierarchical constitution of the Church, a pastoral constitution, such as became a law of grace: "Peter, feed my sheep, feed my lambs."

Finally, it was the law of renovation, of new creation by another breath of life shed over the world, as John saw Jesus breathe over the cenacle. Then, as a consequence, the power of opening heaven to us by conferring pardon: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, and remit sins."[22]

Such did the risen Lord appear to St. John. Such is the perfect image which he has left of him: is there one more vivid, more worthy of man, and more deserving of God?

Nothing now remained for the Master but to ascend to his Father, to prepare a place for us, according to his promise. One day John and the others saw him tranquilly raise himself from the summit of a mountain; and

[21] John xx. 19. [22] John xx. 22.

extending towards him their hands and their eyes, *suspicientes in cœlum*, they ceased not to follow him in that silent adoration until a cloud of glory hid him from the earth, and he returned to the bosom of his eternity.

Here ends what is properly styled the Gospel. Here closes for us the divine period open during thirty years in the history of man. With Jesus Christ triumphant, the best days of earth fled for ever to heaven, and that fatal cloud snatched from sight the visible splendor of a divine presence which the world was never more to enjoy until the day announced by angels, whereon Jesus should redescend, in that same glorious flesh, to begin a reign which will have no end.

It is there, upon that mountain, in that contemplation, that we behold St. John for the last time in the presence of Jesus. He entered, that hour, upon a new life, less manifestly united to God than the other, but possibly more personal, stronger, and more active. He had received all his Master's instructions: it was time to begin his work and to labor for him.

CHAPTER IX.

ST. JOHN'S FIRST TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JEWS—CONVERSION IN THE SANHEDRIM.

I.

THE soul of the Apostle was ready. The whole life of Jesus was yet present to him as his own; that confidential intimacy of his adored Master might make of him the faithful witness of the divine existence; but it would have constituted neither the heroic Apostle, nor still less, perhaps, the sublime Evangelist. His familiar relations with the Son of God would have sufficed to explain his knowledge of things, and to guarantee his sincerity. But what will explain to us that sublimity, that superiority, that supernatural inspiration of his book, that sudden transformation, which, from the fisherman of yesterday, converts him into an almost celestial genius? It required a final stroke of light to illumine that mind; a flame from on high to endow that heart with strength, and to cast in bronze that faithful and tender soul.

Pentecost did that miracle, a necessary miracle, without which all remains unexplained, but which elucidates everything; a miracle so striking that, to disregard it, it has been necessary, in despite of history, to suppose that the Apostle St. John is not the same person with John the Evangelist. And strictly speaking, in fact, it is not the same man: it is a new man. He himself acknowledges it.

He has written that "the Spirit was to come who would teach all truth, that that Spirit would reveal what he had heard from the Word; that he would make known to men things to come, and that he would thus manifest the glory of the Son of God." Was not that to recognize and to reveal the cause of that total and supernatural transformation which had been effected within himself? It is about to show itself in his life and in his works. The soul formed of God and overwhelmed with his gifts resembled a vessel still at anchor in the harbor, and awaiting but a fair breeze to put to sea: the Spirit breathed over the cenacle, and the Apostle set forth.

One of the formal recommendations of Jesus had been that his apostles should associate themselves two by two to preach the Gospel: *Et cœpit eos mittere binos.* For that reason John never after appears alone, and becomes, in the history of those early times, inseparable from St. Peter.[1] That was not merely the prelude and the example of the association which was to be one of the conquering forces of the future. The Doctors of the Church view in the union of the two apostles the type of the alliance of doctrine and of love. To them, Peter and John is truth allied to charity, the former bearing light, the latter, heat; one mistress of minds, the other sovereign of souls; but both invincible when they walk together hand in hand.

In the eyes of St. Augustine, the two Apostles personify together the active and the contemplative life. Peter is energy of action and of combat, such as it exercises itself in this world to attain to the next. John is the quietude of contemplation reposing in silence near the object of its adoration, and preluding the calm joys of eternity. Is

[1] "Petrus Joannem admodum amabat, perque totum Evangelium hæc necessitudo ostenditur, nec non et in Actibus apostolorum: Καὶ γὰρ σφόδρα εφίλει τὸν Ἰωάννην ὁ πέτρος, κ. τ. λ."—(St. Chrysostom *in Joan. Homil.* lxxxviii)

that not, in fact, the picture we form to ourselves of St. John?[2]

The Apostles did not address themselves immediately to all nations. The Shepherd had told them to go first to the sheep which were of his house of Israel. The Jews were, therefore, to receive the first-fruits of the Gospel, and St. John began by those of Jerusalem.[3]

Jerusalem, at that time, had become almost a Roman city. Herod, the Ascalonite, had made it, as Pliny tells us, the most magnificent city of the East. But she had lost, through the profane character of his embellishments, much of her religious originality. The courtier prince had built near there a circus and a theatre, in which were celebrated quinquennial games in honor of Augustus. He had repaired and transformed the Temple, but had profaned it; and above the principal gate of the Holy Place shone the golden eagle of Rome and of Jupiter, as a double insult to religion and to liberty.[4] Whilst the Pharisees exaggerated worship even to superstition, and attached themselves to rites, without, however, succeeding in preserving belief, there were flatterers, styled Herodians, who knew no other Messias than the prince, no other law save his favor, no other festivals but the spectacles to which he invited them; and morality was expiring in orgies and in blood. The crisis of faith was no less mortal. The wits of the time, named Sadducees, professed that one should enjoy this world as far as possible, since nothing was known of the next, and they held immortality cheaply.[5] Thus Jerusalem

[2] S. Aug. *in Joan. Tract.* cxxiv. cap. xxi. col. 1974.

[3] Luke xxiv. 47.

[4] See Josephus, *Jewish Antiq.*, xv. viii. 1. De Saulcy, *Hist. of Herod the Great*, pp. 179, 204, 227, et passim. M. de Saulcy has found the site and the remains of the theatre of Herod, to the right of the old road from Jerusalem to Samaria.

[5] Döllinger, *Jew and Gentile*, Eng. ed., vol. ii. M. de Champagny, *Rome and Judea.*

was tending towards becoming a city of nations. Her great office was finished, her priesthood expired, she herself began to abdicate its honors, and the barrier fell which lately separated her from Gentilism.

However, she still preserved a scrupulous and jealous fidelity to the Jewish worship. The first disciples themselves had in nowise broken with the synagogue.[6] They frequented the Temple, as their Master had done, and it is in that blessed spot that John rendered to Jesus the first testimony of his courageous faith, almost at the price of his blood.

It was but a few days since the celebration of the legal Pentecost. Strangers in great number still crowded the holy city when Peter and John ascended together to the Temple. They halted under the exterior portico at the Beautiful Gate, as it was styled. The Jews designated it the gate of Sur or of Seir. The historian Josephus gives it the name of Corinthian, because of the brass of Corinth of which it was cast; and, amongst the ten gates which gave access into the Temple, that one was considered as the most remarkable, by reason of the rich ornaments wherewith it was decorated.[7]

"Now," relates the Gospel, "it was the ninth hour of prayer," corresponding to our third hour of the evening, and the Apostles went up into the Temple.[8] But if it be by prayer that we gain the heart of God, it is by charity that we gain the hearts of men. The first Christian Apostolate was an act of benevolence, and its first step a miracle of goodness. Under that splendid portico lay a poor beggar, a cripple from his birth, who was carried thither daily, and whose indigence formed a dismal contrast with

[6] S. Chrysost., *in Actus Apost. Homil.* iv.

[7] Joseph., *de Bello Jud.* lib. vi. cap. vi.; *in Græc.* lib. vii. c. xii. p. 916.

[8] Acts iii. 1.

the sumptuous surroundings of the magnificent structure. But let us hearken to the Acts:

"That man, seeing Peter and John about to go into the Temple, asked to receive an alms.

"But Peter with John fastening his eyes upon him, said: Look upon us.

"But he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something of them.

"But Peter said: Silver and gold I have none: but what I have, I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise, and walk.

"And taking him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles received strength.

"And he leaping up stood, and walked: and went in with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."[9]

That power of miracles was one of the powers of the new Apostolate. The Apostles would not have had the foolish daring to have adjudged it to themselves, and to have openly exercised it in so public a place, had they not received the certain authority. Their Master, before departing, and during the last hours passed amidst them, had made it the sign of their preaching, and had bequeathed to them that supernatural virtue as the divine confirmation of the truth and the public sanction of their authority. "Go ye," he had said, "and preach the Gospel to every creature." And he immediately added: "And these signs shall follow them that believe,"[10] and he specifies the distinguishing character thereof, which is charity.

St. John had noticed, as his Gospel proves, that each lesson of Jesus had been prefaced by a benefit from him. It was in accordance with that merciful method that the Apostles acted, and that the Church of Jesus Christ was

[9] Acts iii. 3–8. [10] Mark xvi. 15, 17.

to proceed to convert the world. That conversion was the work of a marvellous goodness, far rather than the fruit of great eloquence. Still less was it purchased by opulence. The Apostles possessed nothing: themselves here declare it. "Silver and gold have I none," says the Prince of the Church. But it is always at the moment of her greatest poverty that the Church and her head perform the most astounding miracles. It is a false maxim, as it has been written, that to give we must possess: to give we must love, and to love we must believe.

Peter believed, John loved. "Look upon us, poor man," they say simultaneously to the cripple at the gate. *Respice in nos*—turn toward those who have been sent by God, become poor, to heal thee, and, "in the name of Jesus, the artisan of Nazareth, rise up, and walk!"

It is still in that name that all rise and walk in heaven and on earth! And the day is not far distant whereon the entire universe, itself a cripple, itself a beggar, at the like word and in the same divine name, will rise and walk, and will ascend towards the Temple, to bear thither to the God which it knew not its faith, its homage, and its thanksgivings.

The Jewish law forbade the lame and the blind to penetrate into the Temple.[11] But once healed, the cripple was eager to repair thither in company with the Apostles. They, on the other hand, could have had no more fitting cortége; and when I wish to picture to myself a perfect image of the Apostolic mission, I recall to my mind Peter and John, doctrine and charity, praying, preaching, and testifying together, leaning upon each other, a beggar beside them.

"And all the people, seeing that man walking and prais-

[11] "The blind and the lame shall not come into the Temple."—2 Kings v. 8.

ing God, were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him.

"And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran to them to the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly wondering." [12]

That was one of those new and magnificent porches built by Herod the Great, in the most exquisite Grecian style, with marble columns, golden vines overrunning the cornice, veils of purple, and paintings, which are faithfully described to us by the historian Josephus. It had been named Solomon's Porch, because it stood upon the large terrace raised by that king, four hundred cubits above the valley. A bridge connected it with the Xystus, a large square which extended from the ravine of Tyropœon to the slope of the mountain of Sion, and of which antiquarians clearly trace the limit and the ruins.[13]

There, under the *velarium* painted in divers colors, were assembled the Jewish proselytes and the Jews of the Gate, who were not permitted to penetrate into the interior of the Temple. It was there, likewise, that Peter, addressing the people, pronounced the discourse which the Acts attribute to St. John as well as to himself: *Loquentibus illis.*

[12] Acts iii. 9, 11.

[13] Joseph., *Jewish Antiq.*, bk. xx. ch. viii. p. 699, and bk. xv. ch. xv. p. 544. M. de Saulcy has perfectly established the geography of the Temple, and of its dependencies, in his recent work upon the siege of Jerusalem. In his *History of Herod*, he thus describes the porch of which he speaks, p. 234: "That triple porch, or royal portico, was certainly the most splendid work which had ever seen the light of day. In fact, the valley being already sufficiently deep to hinder the eye from measuring its abyss from above, Herod crowned it by a porch so elevated in height as to cause dizziness. The porch was ornamented with four rows of columns, disposed throughout its entire length, facing regularly one another. The columns were so large that it required three men to embrace the shaft. They were one hundred and sixty-two in number. Their capitals, of the Corinthian order, were of the finest workmanship. . . . The ceilings were adorned with carvings in wood in *alto-rilievo* and varied designs. . . The whole work was so wonderfully polished, that those who had not seen it could not credit similar magnificence, and those who beheld it were struck with admiration."

Nothing could be more courageous and, at the same time, more simple than that address. It was the affirmation of the divinity and of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in all the eloquence of facts: "God sent you his own Son, Jesus Christ, whom you condemned. He was the Holy One and the Just: you denied him. He was the Author of Life:[14] you killed him. But God hath raised him from the dead, of which we are witnesses; we furnish the proof thereof by curing in his name. Be converted therefore: God will pardon you, because it was through ignorance you betrayed him, and you are still his chosen people."[15]

Such is the synopsis of the discourse of Peter and of John. They were heard, and five thousand men present believed their testimony.

But there were some who did not find those conversions to their taste. Firstly, the priests, who came forth from the Temple, curious themselves to hear those strange prophets. With them came also him who was styled "the officer of the Temple," a superior official who commanded night and day the troops appointed for the guard of Sion, and by whom every movement as well as every assemblage of people was characterized as seditious. It appears that he occupied a very high rank, since Josephus names him immediately after the high-priest.[16] But the most eager for repression were the Sadducees. They professed, as we know, a species of Epicureanism, mingled with Judaism, and we are well aware that it is amongst the partisans of free-living that Christianity has, at all times, met the most violent opponents. Their authority prevailed against the Apostles, who were arrested without any other form of trial. But as evening had come, they waited until the

[14] The Greek text has: The chief of life: Ἀρχηγὸν ζωῆς. Ducem vitæ.
[15] Acts iii. 12, and sequel. [16] Joseph., *de Bello Jud.* vi. v. 3.

next day to assemble the Council, and Peter and John passed that night in prison: *Posuerunt eos in custodiam.*[17]

What was that prison? The nature of the crime, the authority of Caiphas, who was of the sect of the Sadducees, lead us to presume that the house wherein the two Apostles were *held*, according to the expression of the text, was no other than the dwelling of the high-priest himself; that wherein the Lord likewise had been confined the night of his passion, and where the disciples had just undergone the fate of their Master. I will not insist upon this conjecture.[18] But the soul finds great sweetness in the thought of Peter and John, after barely two months had elapsed, meeting in the place where Jesus had suffered, finding there his traces, his courage, his ardor; being honored by his fetters and animating themselves by the success of that first day, Peter kissing those bonds which had been predicted him, John tasting the chalice which had been promised him, and both passing the night in that thanksgiving which was, during three centuries, to echo throughout so many latomiæ, dungeons, and catacombs.

The morrow was the day of fresh testimony. In fact, "Above the people," remarks an orator, "calmly rises vigilance and self-respect, the highest representation of right and of truth. Each nation has somewhere a magistracy which unites in itself the glory and the light of the land, and there must appear all teaching which claims empire over minds."[19] The doctrine of the Apostles could

[17] Acts iv. 3.

[18] "They placed Jesus," says St. Bonaventure, "in a prison situated underground, which may yet be seen, or at least its ruins."—*Meditat. on Life of Christ*, ch. lxxv. "The house of Caiphas has since become an Armenian Church. In the sanctuary, on the Epistle side, bending down, we enter a small oratory, said to be the prison wherein the Saviour was confined the very night of his seizure."—Comte J. d'Estourmel, *Journal of Travel in the East.*

[19] Lacordaire, *Conference* xxxvii., *The Inner Life of Jesus Christ.*

not escape that common law, and both were brought before the Sanhedrim.

The Sanhedrim, or supreme council of the nation, was composed of seventy members, presided over by the chief priest. That tribunal sat daily, and the gravest cases, civil and religious, such as false prophecy, idolatry, and blasphemy, came under its jurisdiction. Josephus relates that kings themselves bowed before its sentences. Here, then, was question merely of two poor fishermen. But all judiciary pomp had been displayed for that solemnity. Annas, the former prince of the priests, presided; Caiphas, John, and Alexander were beside him. All those names are found in the history of that time. Caiphas was still the high-priest of that year. John, the son of Ananus, was later governor of the cantons of Acrabacene and of Gophnitica. Alexander Tiberius was to become governor of Judea after Fadus.[20] Around them crowded the elders, the scribes, and the princes of the people.[21]

The Apostles appeared, they questioned them. "By what power, and by what name, have you done this?" they were both asked. Peter answered. He was no longer the weak Peter whom Caiphas had so lately seen deny his Master at the voice of the portress. He besought the princes of the people and the ancients to hearken to his word. He did not inveigh against the chiefs of his nation. He respected their power, but without yielding aught of the rights of truth. To the murderers of his Master he announced the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth: they had crucified him, but he had been raised to life by God; they had repudiated him, and he was, however, the corner-stone whereon all should rest. They blasphemed his name, and there was no other name under heaven whereby men might be saved.[22]

[20] Joseph, *Jewish Antiq.*, bk. xx., ch. iii., p. 690.
[21] Acts iv. 5.
[22] Acts iv. 8–12.

Nothing, says a writer, can render the grandeur and the import of that scene. The entire world at that time was enduring frightful oppression. An ignominious yoke weighed down all heads. Efforts to sever it, whether by cunning or by force, had but riveted the chains which enslaved humanity. But, for the first time, despotism had met an insurmountable barrier, an invincible resistance. Unarmed men opposed its menaces merely by indomitable faith: it yielded before them. In that first conflict between conscience and force, the former bore away the palm of victory. That day true liberty was born into the world, whence it will never more depart.[23]

The judges were confounded. They gazed at those uncultivated, unlettered men, yesterday scarcely knowing the tongue of their country, *sine litteris et idiotæ*, and they could in no wise understand that new eloquence. It was inspired, Christian eloquence, apostolic eloquence, simple but sure of itself, which, on that day, began to exercise the empire whose sceptre was to rest less between the hands of genius than within those of sanctity. The magistrates asked one another who were those orators. They remembered having seen them, in their *atrium*, timid or apostate, while their Master was being judged,[24] and they knew not whence came their sudden constancy.[25] The cripple likewise was there, standing near them. They experienced the indefinable anguish we feel when we find ourselves struggling against an invisible and mysterious force.[26] Powerless to contend, they wished to compound, and, having

[23] See M. de Pressensé, *Hist. of the First Three Centuries of the Church*, vol. i., p. 363.

[24] "Cognoscebant eos quia cum Jesu fuerant, in passione, inquit. Hi enim soli tunc una erant, quando viderunt illos humiles, dejectos: quod illos maxime in admirationem rapiebat, repentina nempe mutatio. Nam illic erant Annas et Caiphas, et obstupefaciebat eos illa tanta libertas."—S. Chrysost. *in Act. Homil.* x.

[25] Acts iv. 13.

[26] Acts iv. 14.

deliberated, they agreed to forbid the disciples to pronounce that name.

The latter were indignant thereat, and Peter and John unanimously answered:

"If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." [27]

It was necessary to yield. The testimony was formal, and the miracle was manifest. The people had pronounced for those whom they had just witnessed cure a man of the people. The Council dreaded to resume against the disciples the tissue of intrigues or of open violence which had so badly succeeded against Jesus. They had recourse merely to threats, and the Apostles were dismissed, more strengthened and more intrepid than ever.

The Acts relate the welcome they met with in the assembly of the brethren. It was an ovation. When they had related what had passed, all the cenacle rose to thank God for that noble inauguration: "Lord, thou art he that didst make heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them! Why did the Gentiles rage, and the kings of the earth stand up, and the princes assemble together against the Lord and against thy Holy Child, Jesus, whom thou hast anointed! And now, O Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all confidence they may speak thy word. Stretch forth thy hand to cures and signs and wonders, to be done by the name of thy Holy Son Jesus!" [28]

They were immediately heard. The cenacle trembled, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, new energy pervaded the souls of all; and nothing thenceforth could restrain their eloquence.

Thus opened the eve of the Apostolate and that of mar-

[27] Acts iv. 19. [28] Acts iv. 24 30.

tyrdom. It is the glory of St. John to have advanced the foremost to that trial, as became the soldier and the friend of Jesus. Companions at the Supper, upon Thabor, at the Resurrection, and at the final adieu by the Lake of Genesareth, John and Peter were again to be united in testimony, to share the same prison, to undergo the like menaces, and, had it been requisite, to walk together to the same punishment, like those two noble Christians whom an artist, too early snatched from us, has represented fraternally advancing into the midst of the amphitheatre; one younger, more artless, more astonished possibly in his childish inexperience; the other, walking with firmer step, appearing to sustain him, and holding his hand, which he presses to his heart.[29]

II.

A more glorious triumph was reserved to them: that of conquering their judges, and of making friends of their persecutors. When the Apostles had appeared before the Council, the Rabbi Gamaliel, who occupied the highest rank, had claimed for them liberty to teach, referring the future of the new religion to the decisive proofs of time and of experience. That master of the law was not the only one shaken. The holy coalition of St. Peter and of St. John encroached upon the Sanhedrim, and a family illustrious in the rabbinism of the time brought the enormous weight of their influence to the first commencement of the kingdom of God.

Amid the secret disciples whom Jesus had gained by his preaching, the most considerable was a prince of the people, who, the Gospel of St. John tells us, paid nocturnal

[29] See the fine painting of Benonville, *The Christians in the Amphitheatre.*

visits to the Lord, whom he loved. He was named Nicodemus. And the title of ruler bestowed upon him by St. John clearly proves the rank he occupied amongst the doctors of Israel.

However, he recognized in Jesus of Nazareth a greater master than himself. In a night of confidential and calm discussion, the latter had confounded him by the revelation of a wisdom superior to that of earth. Then Jesus had unveiled himself manifestly to him as being the Son of God. It was to him likewise that had been addressed those sublime words of the Gospel of St. John: "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that the world by him may be saved!" But Nicodemus dared not break with his school; and possibly there was some hidden reproach as to the pusillanimous hesitation of the disciple, and some allusion to his nightly visits, in these latter words of more elevated meaning: "Light is come into the world: but men love darkness rather than light. He that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God." [30]

It was at Jerusalem, at the time of the first Pasch, that Jesus held that first interview with the man of law, which was followed by several others, as the fathers think.[31] We follow, step by step, as it were, the progress of that soul towards the light which had just dawned before her.

Nicodemus at first had been shown to us as a man of learning, tormented by doubt, and solicited by truth, who seeks and who loves, but who is bound by habit and enchained by fear. Another page of St. John presents him to us under a new aspect. He is an upright character

[30] John iii. 19, 21.

[31] "Intelligendum est ad Jesum non tunc solum, sed tunc primum venisse Nicodemum: veritatisse autem postea, ut fieret audiendo discipulus."—S. Aug *in Joan. Tract.* cxx. cap. xix col. 1954.

whom injustice revolts, who protests against it, but who, whilst strong against iniquity, is weak before sarcasm. Who has not met such men? It was during the feast of Scenopegia.[32] Nicodemus sat in the council of the doctors, affected by the miracles and by the teaching of Jesus. As they were plotting the death of the innocent Saviour, Nicodemus rises, and claims at least judicial proceedings: "Doth our law judge any man unless it first hear him, and know what he doth?"[33] Then they answer him: "Art thou also a Galilean?" They are in nowise deceived: Nicodemus is a Christian. But the irony of his associates paralyzes his faith, and the disciple is silenced.

A third time St. John gives him a place in his venerated book, and a fresh phase of that complex soul is again manifested to us. The man of doctrine and the man of justice was likewise a man of charity and of good works; for scarcely was the divine Prophet laid in the tomb when Nicodemus arises to embalm him, bearing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight.[34] Who does not recognize St. John in these exact details? But that very charity, whilst proving his attachment towards the Just Man crucified, no less evinces his distrust of the divine promises of his resurrection; and in that generous inspiration of the doctor, there was more faithful friendship than faith, more bent of nature than movement of grace.

The resurrection of Him whom he had buried was the final ray of light. He believed openly, and demanded to be born again of water and of the spirit, according to the precept of the Master. Peter and John baptized him.[35]

[32] *Scenopegia*, name given by the Greeks to the Jewish "Feast of Tabernacles."—TRANSLATOR.

[33] John vii. 50.

[34] John xix. 39.

[35] "Nicodemus nepos meus . . . eum a Domino audisset, baptizatus est a sanctis apostolic Petro et Joanne."—*Epist. Luciani.* See Photius,

The precious documents of the Oriental Church, the guardian of those originals, teach us nothing further regarding the relations between that doctor and the Apostles. But in itself alone, the baptism of Nicodemus, by St. John, casts upon the testimony of the latter a vivid brightness; and we perceive the sources whence the Evangelist has drawn the account of those secret and personal conversations, the subject of which was that same grace of baptism, the sacrament whereof was conferred upon Nicodemus by the Apostle, as he had gathered the celestial doctrine concerning it from the very lips of God.

It cost him dear to declare himself a Christian. A revelation regarding him, recognized as authentic,[36] tells us that he was first turned out of the Sanhedrim, driven from the Synagogue, despoiled of his wealth, and finally condemned to undergo the martyrdom of the holy deacon Stephen, whose tomb he was later to share. But God raised up a new defender for his persecuted family, who bore Nicodemus to his country-house of Capharmagala. There opened a fresh field for the apostolic ardor of St. Peter and of St. John.

That powerful protector was Gamaliel, and after that of St. Paul, who was his disciple, the Church of Jerusalem could have made no more important conquest. Grandson of Rabbi Hillel, he had inherited his reputation of learning, of consideration, and of holiness. His father was named Simeon, and some writers think that he was the

Biblioth. Cod. clxxi.; Genevæ, 1612. Tillemont, *Eccles. Hist.* t. ii. p. 23. Baronius, *Ann.*, ad an. 34. *Epist. Luciani ad Omnem Ecclesiam*, apud S. Aug. t. iv. edit. Migne, p. 810.

[36] *Inventio Corporis S. Stephani et Sociorum*, et *Revelatio Luciano Presbytero Facta*, apud appendicem, t. x. novæ edit. S. Aug. Lorani. Tillemont, *Hist. Eccles.* t. ii. p. 28. Bosnage, *Hist. of the Jews*, vol. ii bk. iii. ch. i. St. Augustine mentions it as one of the great events of his time: "Quod certe modo in revelatione corporis beatissime Stephani fere omnibus gentibus declaratur."—*In Joan Tract.* cxx. cap. xix., *Sermo* cccxviii.

saintly old man who had received Jesus in his arms in the Temple. Gamaliel was the oracle of his time. "At his death," says the Talmud, "the light of the law was quenched in Israel." He had been invested, add the Talmudists, with the title of *Nasi*, or ruler of the Council, and the Gospel agrees with Jewish authors in declaring him a just, wise, moderate man, impartial towards all, averse to violence, and ruling all parties through his moral grandeur, which had gained him unanimous respect and confidence. He had been the first to cause the biblical text to be read in Greek in Jerusalem itself.[37] But he had not dreamed of Socratizing Moses. He had remained a Jew in his fidelity to the practices of the law, which was the pride of the entire sect of the Pharisees. Furthermore, he conducted in the city a school of rabbinical theology, which certain authors style an academy.

Amongst the number of his disciples was Paul of Tarsus. Barnabas is also named as another, and some pretend that Stephen, likewise, owned him as his Master. At least it is certain that after the death of the youthful deacon, he inaugurated that solemn mourning for him mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and that he conveyed his remains to Capharmagala. It is still more certain that he indirectly pleaded the cause of Christianity in the very bosom of the Sanhedrim, appealing to the irrefragable experience of the future to test its vitality. That uprightness saved him. The Master was Christian, and demanded baptism from St. Peter and St. John.[38] The aurora of truth already began to illumine the mountain tops.

Then was seen, for the first time, in the bosom of a great family, that diversity of belief and those dissensions which the Lord had formerly prophesied: "The son shall

[37] Niemeyer, *Charakteristik der Bibel*, t. i. p. 633, et seq.

[38] S. Chrysostom, *in Act. Homil.* xix. p. 182; *Epist. Luciani*, ut supra.

rise against the father, brother against brother, the wife against the husband!" Gamaliel believed; but his wife, named Ethua or Athea, preferred rather to separate herself from him than to embrace his faith. Of the two sons, the elder, named Sclemias, followed his mother in her error. Abibas, the younger, was Christian like his father and history surrounds him with a virginal grace, which rendered him a worthy disciple of St. John. He was but twenty years of age. He is represented as the friend of the young Saul, his fellow-disciple, undoubtedly at his father's lectures. They are described as being both faithfully united in strict fidelity to Jewish traditions, going together to the Temple at the hour of prayer. But Abibas preceded Saul in conversion as a recompense. Dying young, he was deposited in the sepulchral grotto wherein Stephen, Nicodemus, and Gamaliel himself were destined to sleep near him, the neophytes and the martyrs.[39]

It was more than three centuries after that John, bishop of Jerusalem, and the priest Lucian, discovered their bodies by means of a revelation, still solemnized by the Church.[40] The Church then reigned, and the time had come to associate to her glory those generous workmen at her foundation.

[39] "Similiter et Abibas filius meus dilectissimus, qui mecum baptismum Christi accepit ab ejus discipulis, viginti annorum existens, ante me mortuus est. . . . Mea vero uxor, Ethua habens nomen, et Sclemias primo genitus meus, voluerunt esse fidei Christi cultores."—*Luciani Epist. de Revelatione Corporis Stephani proto-martyris*, ad calcem t. vii. novæ edit. S. Augustini, apud Migne, p. 811. In the manuscript of Fleury-sur-Loire: "Abibas filius meus habens multam scientiam, castus corpore, et nullam mulieris sciens maculam; sed semper templo Dei vacans cum Paulo discipulo meo. Præcesserat me ad Deum immaculatus."

[40] In Feste Invent. reliq. S. Steph., die iii. Augusti.

CHAPTER X.

ST. JOHN IN SAMARIA—MARTYRDOM OF HIS BROTHER, ST. JAMES—THE COUNCIL—THE DISPERSION.

I.

MEANWHILE Charity had begun her reign within that noble community of the Church of the cœnaculum, which was to become the ideal type of churches, and the remembrance of which was later to influence the last instructions of St. John at Ephesus. "The disciples persevered in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and of prayers. And all they that believed were together, and had all things in common. They continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart: praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."[1]

In fact, the Gospel was already no longer the little grain of mustard-seed of the parable; the tree had sprung forth from the earth. Truth had not yet risen for the nations seated under the shadow of death; but a city, a province thitherto schismatic, unclosed its eyes to celestial light, and, strange to say, it was that very Samaria which had refused the Lord the right of way, and which John had dedicated to the fiery wrath of heaven. Converted by Philip, one of the seven newly-consecrated deacons, and baptized by him, those disciples had not yet been able to

[1] Acts ii. 42.

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost from the hands of the Apostles. Peter was named to confer upon them that benefit. There again John could not be separated from him, and they departed together.[2] If it were reserved to the Apostle of truth to call down upon these baptized heads the spirit of light, was it not likewise fitting that the spirit of charity should be conferred upon them by the disciple of love, and that, knowing then of what spirit he was, John should bring down upon them a better flame?

They therefore imposed hands upon the neophytes. Thus to that of the word was joined a second and higher ministry: the administration of sacramental graces, in all the plenitude of the apostolic power.

It was there that John, for the first time, and in the very beginning of his apostolate, was confronted by one of those heresies, at once philosophical and mystical, which, under the name of Gnosticism, were to be the field of his future combats, and to bestow upon his defence of the Divinity its peculiar character. In that province of Samaria dwelt a magician, known under the name of Simon, who thenceforth attempted in his life and his doctrine one of those wretched falsifications of Jesus which formed the great ambition of that time.

The recent discoveries of the *Philosophoumena* has confirmed the unanimous opinion of the fathers, who see in him the chief of the heretical Gnosis. In virtue of that, the meeting of Simon and of St. John is a remarkable fact, since, for the first time, it brings the disciple in contact with the great error refuted by his Gospel, and connects the history of the Apostle to that of his book.

Simon was a native of the town of Gitto or Gitta in Samaria; and we must own that no land was better prepared than the latter to receive the impress of the doctrines

[2] Acts viii. 14.

and of the miracles of the wonder-working innovator. Was it not there especially that the hope of the Messias had assumed that ardent patriotic character provoked by the hated rivalry of the Jews? Did they not hold that Christ was to issue from their race? Had they not quite recently, as Origen attests, attached themselves to an impostor named Dositheus, who pretended to be the Son of God?[3] St. John himself has related to us their eager willingness to accept the Messias upon the word of a woman.

Turning to his own profit the impression produced by the passage of the Saviour across Samaria, Simon had proclaimed himself "the great power of God." It is under that name that he is mentioned in the Acts.[4] Was that divine power, as Grimm supposes, the supreme and absolute God? Was it, under another name, the word of God, understood in the sense of Philo, as Neander pretends?[5] Precious fragments of a work composed by himself or by his disciples inform us that Simon admitted a hidden and invisible principle, whence emanated the world, and which, doubling itself in its manifestation, revealed itself as active principle in minds, as passive principle in matter and in bodies.[6] It would be impossible to advance a more daring pantheism reduplicated with dualism. Were error but a circle, a species of Ixion's wheel, upon which humanity turns in an eternally same rotation, the most gigantic negation adduced against the Church of our own day would but bring us back to the sophisms which she has known from her beginning.

[3] Origen, *Comment. in Joan.* viii. 27.—S. Epiph. *Hær.* xiii.—See Joseph Grimm, *Die Samariter*, p. 117; 1854.

[4] Acts viii. 10.

[5] Joseph Grimm, *Die Samariter*, p. 150.—Neander, *Pflanzung*, i. 70.

[6] Bausen (Hippolytus, t. i. 43) establishes the authenticity of those fragments which we find in the *Philosophoumena*, p. 163.

In the person of Simon was represented the spiritual principle as he taught it, varying his name, furthermore, according to places. To the Jews he proposed himself as he who had dictated to them the Law of Sinai. To the pagans he represented himself as the sovereign *Zeus*, giving the name of Minerva or of incarnate Wisdom to an abandoned woman whom he had found at Tyre, and whom he styled Helen. She it is who, in his system, represented the passive and material principle which he himself came to lift up and to revive in the world. When Christianity appeared, he did not repudiate it. He had received baptism, and from the lessons of Philip he drew whatever might agree with his views. Thus that contact with Christian doctrine marks a third phase in his system, wherein are travestied the teaching as well as the person of the Redeemer. Was he not himself the liberator of souls degraded in the body? Was he not the good shepherd come to seek and to save, in the mire of the world whither she had wandered, that unfortunate Helen, that wounded sheep, who was lost in the wilderness of the senses?

He, therefore, went about through Samaria and its environs, sowing the seed of his doctrine and of his juggleries. In the ancient Oriental religions of nature, wherein man believed himself under the action of evil powers, the magician who conquers them or charms them by his art is the true Redeemer. Syria, Phœnicia, and possibly Rome beheld him astonish the multitude, no less by the seduction of his magical works than by the pride of his life, giving himself, according to St. Jerome, the name of the Divine Word. "I am the Word," said he—"the Word of God, the Beautiful, the Paraclete, the Almighty, the All of God." [7]

[7] Ego sum Sermo Dei, ego sum Speciosus, ego Paracletus, ego Omnipotens, ego Omnia Dei (S. Hieronym.) Upon Simon the magician see S. Epiphan. *Hæres.* xxi.; S. Justin, *Apolog.* ii. p. 69; S. Iren., lib. i. cap. xx.; Tillemont, *Hist. Eccl*, t. ii. p. 37.

We may readily imagine the impression St. John received from these blasphemies. In his early missions his identity is so completely effaced behind that of St. Peter that he is undistinguishable. His answer is in the Gospel. There, when he shall proclaim that the only Divine Word is Jesus Christ, Son of God, by whom all things are made, it must be referred to that first encounter of his apostolate; and remembering that he had seen, in the beginning, the parody of the Word incarnate raise itself up in the person of Simon, it is not surprising that he should have constituted himself the avenger and the Evangelist of the true Word incarnate in Jesus.

Simon was witness of the miracles wrought upon the neophytes of Samaria by the imposition of hands of the two Apostles; and those gifts of the Holy Ghost, which filled him with admiration, no less excited his envy. Seeing therein but the effect of magic spells performed by competitors more skilful than himself, the magician proposed to Peter and to John to purchase their secret. But those who had just told the beggar at the gate that they possessed neither gold nor silver repulsed the interested advances of the impostor. "Keep thy money to thyself to perish with thee!" they replied to Simon Magus.[8]

That was the irrevocable condemnation of all spirit of sensuality or of traffic in the future Church. Woe to him who seeks to make God's house a house of commerce! When the Lord had found sellers in the Temple, he had driven them forth with indignation; and the closer we study that age of primitive and ideal beauty, the more we see religion breaking with the old servitudes of the age, disengaging herself from all inferior interests. Grace, doctrine, revelation, benediction, are not of those treasures

[8] Acts viii. 13–19.

which enter into trade of things of the earth. We are not of this world—no more of the world of money than of the world of strength. What we should demand of men is not their wealth, but their souls; and amongst the words by which Jesus Christ had explained to the Apostles their great mission, none were more formal than these: "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Finally, there is a third and last ministry of consecration of the Church and of organization through the election and the promotion of pastors. St. John was not slow to exercise it. In those days the Apostles appointed one of themselves—James, surnamed the Less and the Just, son of a sister of Mary, and a relative of Jesus—to fill the office of Bishop of Jerusalem. The most respectable tradition of the Church, based upon an epistle of Pope Anacletus, quoted by Clement of Alexandria, and handed down by Eusebius, gives the honor of that choice to Peter, James, and John.[9] The spirit of strength which he had received in the cenacle was wanting neither during his life nor in his death. James the Just, by his great sanctity, gained the veneration of the Jews no less than that of Christians. We shall soon behold him beside Mary and John, and we shall learn what a brother the latter found in him when the Lord had called his own brother to himself.

II.

In fact, James, brother of John, was the first of the Apostles who suffered martyrdom. In the Gospel account the existences of these two sons of Zebedee seemed min-

[9] Κλήμης δὲ περίστητι Πέτρον καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην μετὰ τὴν ἀνάληψιν τοῦ Σωτῆρος Ἰάκωβον τὸν δικαιον Επίσκοπον Ἱερουσολύμων ἑλέσθαι.—Eusebius, lib. ii. cap. i. p. 38; juxta Clement. Alex. *Institt.*, lib. vi. Upon that consecration of St. James by the three holy Apostles is based the custom requiring three officiating prelates at the consecration of a bishop.

gled together, without any feature particularizing the distinct personality of St. James. Brought up on the same bark, called the same day to become fishers of men, associated together at the divine confidences of the Transfiguration, of the agony, and of the last moments of Jesus, they seemed destined to be inseparable in death, as they had been indivisible during life. Had not the Lord said to both at the same time and under similar circumstances that they should drink of his chalice? But the chalice of the one was not to resemble that of the other. For John, the bitter sorrow was to see his brother suffer and to remain behind; for James, it was to sever himself from John and to depart.

"In those days," say the Acts, "Herod, the king, stretched forth his hands to afflict some of the Church. And he killed James, the brother of John, by the sword."[10]

That took place eleven years after the death of Jesus, in the forty-fourth year of his Incarnation, the second of the reign of Claudius, Quinctius Crispinus and Marcus Statilius Taurus being consuls.

He who thus shed the blood of the Apostle was the too celebrated Herod Agrippa, whose eventful life has been related by Josephus.[11] The favorite of Antonia, mother of Germanicus, partisan and familiar of the house of the Drusi, cradled in the intrigues as in the orgies of the palace of Tiberius, Agrippa had acquired the easy principles and the corrupt morals of the worst persecutors. Herod the Great, his grandfather, was that murderer of the infants of Bethlehem who had aimed at the life of Jesus. His sister was that adulterous Herodias who had demanded the head of John the Baptist; and we know what style of celebrity was to be reserved in the empire to his daughter, the beautiful Berenice. Daring and artful, a

[10] Acts xii. 1. [11] Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.*, lib. xix. cap. iv.

dominator and a courtier, Agrippa possessed the varied resources of the Romans of the decadence, for whom there was no other end save fortune, and no other morality but that of success. From the favor of Caligula he had fallen to shameful imprisonment; then he had suddenly been drawn from disgrace and exile, and elevated to the throne of his fathers, without having learned virtue from misfortune.

However, the perversions of Roman life did not hinder him from professing a certain official taste for the religion of the Jews, which gained him the favor of the nation and of the priests. He had, furthermore, a cultivated and polished mind; did not compromise himself by useless crimes; was a votary of justice, in so far as it suited his own interests; but, on the other hand, was ready for everything, and never hesitated at any crime which could further his designs.

So it happened in this circumstance. Agrippa had returned from Rome. The Emperor Claudius, whose accession to the empire he had just powerfully seconded, not content with confirming him in the possession of Galilee, as well as in the ancient tetrarchate of Philip, had just bestowed upon him Judea, Samaria, and all the land of Libanus; and a treaty of alliance, filled with his praise, had been graven upon a brazen tablet set up in the Forum. Strong in the support of the prince, Agrippa wished to become so in the affection of his people; and as on his return he found the land deeply divided by the progressive invasion of the Christian religion, he thought, says the Scripture, that one of the surest means of popularity was to commence vigorous proceedings against that odious minority.[12]

That was during the days of the Azymes which pre-

[12] "And seeing that it pleased the Jews."—Acts xii. 3.

ceded Easter. Agrippa, who ordinarily resided at Cesarea, repaired to the Holy City for that solemnity. The crowd was great at Jerusalem; and those of the dispersion, assembled thither for that festival, conversed but of those Jews who were seen everywhere preaching a new God. Their conquests alarmed the priests and the rabbis, menaced in their jurisdiction and in their teaching. Indifferent, undoubtedly, upon the question of doctrine, Agrippa was less so regarding the kingdom prophesied to the new King of the Jews. The Pharisees inflamed the fanaticism of the people. A victim was necessary to public rage; James had the preference.

If we may credit the very justly-suspected chronicle of Lucius Dexter, the Apostle had returned from Spain, and he had come to seek inspiration near the brethren and the Virgin Mary, when he was denounced by the Jew Ozias,[13] who handed him over to the soldiers of Agrippa. Then was seen, relates Clement of Alexandria, quoted by Eusebius, what was afterwards to be so frequently witnessed in the history of the saints. The informer himself, terrified at his crime, and affected by the gentle firmness of the martyr, declared himself a Christian at the risk of his life. They were both condemned; and as they walked together to the place of execution, it is related that Ozias, casting himself at the feet of the saint, besought him to pardon him. James hesitated somewhat. He had already forgiven him in his heart; but remembering that Ozias had not been baptized, he scrupled to give the holy, fraternal

[13] Tillemont refutes that opinion of a journey of St. James the Greater into Spain, solely based, he says, upon the treatise *De Vita et Morte Sanctorum*, cap. lxxiii., falsely attributed to Isidore of Seville, upon the citations of Bede, a writing imputed to St. Julian of Toledo, the letters of Calixtus II., and the Breviary of Toledo. He questions these authorities, and grants merely that the body of St. James may have been transported into Galicia long after his death.—Tillemont, t. i. p. 596, note 6.

kiss to him who was not regenerated in the faith. God then revealed to him that that man was already baptized in his grace, and that he would soon be so in his blood. James then embraced him, bidding him adieu in the words of the Lord: "Peace be unto you!" Then both were beheaded.[14] The Acts specify that manner of martyrdom, which was the punishment reserved to free men and to Roman citizens.

These events took place on the 25th of March. Eleven years previously, during those very days of the Pasch, the Divine Master had died, and had himself also pardoned his executioners, within sight of that same city which stoned the righteous men and slew the prophets. Twelve years previously, having asked James if he could have the courage to be plunged like him into his bloody baptism, the latter had valiantly answered: "I can!" He had kept his word.

But John, who had received the same promise and had taken the like engagement—was he too to enter upon the possession of the divine inheritance? The martyrdom of his brother was the first sacrifice which God demanded of him, which caused St. John Chrysostom to say that in that way the Apostle died several times.[15] Moses had written in the Book of Leviticus: "They shall offer to God two living sparrows. One of them shall be immolated; the other, which is alive, shall be sprinkled with the blood of the other, and shall be let go that it may fly away."[16] The event passed according to that rite. James had been the

[14] Περὶ τούτου δ'ὸ Κλήμης τοῦ Ἰακώβου καὶ ἱστορίαν μνήμης ἀξίαν ἐν τῇ τῶν ὑποτυπώσεων ἑβδόμῃ παρατίθεται, ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ φάσκων, κ. τ. λ. —Clemens Alex. *Institut.*, lib. vii.; apud Eusebius, lib. ii. cap. ix. page 47.

[15] Nam et Jacobo gladio caput abscissum est, et multoties mortuus est Joannes. Καὶ γὰρ Ἰάκωβος ἀπετμήθη μαχαίρα, καὶ Ἰωάννης πολλάκις ἀπέθανε — S. Chrysost. *Oper.*, t. i. p. 775.

[16] Leviticus xiv. 4–7.

chosen victim. Covered with the blood of his brother, John will shortly spread his wings and set off.

III.

The martyrdom of St. James was the signal for the first dispersion of the Apostles.[17] Seeing that King Agrippa had prepared the like fate for Simon Peter, their head, and that the latter even had only escaped it thanks to a delivering angel, the disciples remembered the words of the Lord: "If they persecute you in one city, flee into another." Therefore, shaking the dust from their feet, they prepared to quit Jerusalem.

An ancient tradition, preserved by Eusebius, who had gathered it from Apollonius, a writer of the second century, tells us that Jesus had enjoined upon the Apostles to remain twelve years in Judea ere dispersing upon distant missions.[18] That was the explanation of the Gospel words: "Go first to the lost sheep of my sheepfold of Israel."

That time was expiring. The tents of Israel, as he had predicted, were about to expand; and already Peter had received the revelation that thenceforth the new religion recognized no distinction of race. It was he, in fact, as prince of the universal Church, who had been the first to bestow the baptism of Jesus Christ upon a centurion of

[17] Upon the time of the dispersion of the Apostles see the dissertation of Tillemont, *Eccl. Hist.*, t. ii. note 4, upon St. Matt., p. 647. Baron. *Annal. Eccl.*, ad an. 44, § 14.

[18] Ἔτι δὲ ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως τὸν Σωτῆρά φησι προστεταχέναι τοῖς αὐτοῦ ἀποστόλοις "ἐπὶ δώδεκα ἔτεσι μὴ χωρισθῆναι τοῦ Ἱερουσαλήμ."—Apollonius, script. 2d sæculi; apud Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. v. cap. xviii. p. 186. Clement of Alexandria quotes the identical expressions of the Lord: "Μετὰ δώδεκα ἔτη ἐξέλθετε εἰς τὸν κόσμοι, μή τις εἴπη. Ουκ ἠκούσαμεν. Post duodecim annos exite in mundum, ne quis dicat: Non recepimus verbum."—*Stromat.*, vi. 5.

the legions of Tiberius—the soldier Cornelius, a descendant, possibly, of that *gens Cornelia* lately so influential at Rome. We may even believe that that city herself was powerfully affected by the name of Jesus Christ, since she numbered many Christians in her midst before the apostolate of Sts. Peter and Paul; and that, according to Tertullian, Tiberius had spoken to the Senate of admitting Christ amongst the number of their gods.[19]

But the most important conquest of faith was the youthful Paul of Tarsus. Never had the apostolate a more valuable recruit than that Pharisee, the disciple of Gamaliel; Jew by origin, Greek by his native land, Roman by his right of citizenship, belonging by those titles to all the greatest nations, and, therefore, undoubtedly predestined by God to the honor of being their master in Christian doctrine. He had not, like St. Peter, had the symbolical vision of the equal admissibility of all nations into the kingdom of God. But, as he declared, he had received directly from Jesus Christ himself the mission of preaching to the Gentiles. Then he had likewise come to Jerusalem in order to confer with the first missionaries of the Gospel of Jesus. There, he relates again, "those who seemed to be pillars of the Church—James, Cephas, and John—gave him the right hand of fellowship, recommending him specially to be mindful of the poor,"[20] which he was careful to observe.

That is the first time we behold St. Paul in company with St. John. It is likewise the last. The Gospel mentions no further communication nor relation between those two Apostles, called, however, to reap successively the same field of Asia. Separated by distance, they ever remained brothers in doctrine. Under an incontestable difference of language their teaching is the same. The

[19] Tertull. *Apolog.*, cap v. p. 6, et cap xxi. p. 22. [20] Galat. ii. 9, 10.

alliance formed between themselves and Peter in that interview was never severed, and in their writings, as formerly in their lives, the three Apostles unceasingly walk hand in hand.

Meanwhile, a discussion was secretly arising in the bosom of the infant Church. The conversion of the pagans had aroused the Jews, who could not consent that their inheritance of promises and of graces should be thus transferred to foreign nations. "Wherefore," those of Jerusalem demanded of Peter, "didst thou go in with men uncircumcised and didst eat with them?" [21]

Those half-Christianized Jews wished to subject the pagan neophytes to circumcision as to a characteristic and indispensable sign of the Mosaic alliance. The *Philosophoumena* tells us to what extent they carried that mania: "Certain Jews," it is said therein, "when they have heard any one speak of God, if he be not circumcised, watch him until they find him in some isolated spot. Then they threaten to kill him if he do not allow himself to be circumcised. If he refuse to consent, they do not spare him, but put him to death. For that reason those sectaries have received from some the name of Zelotes, and from others that of Sikars or Swordsmen." [22]

The whole future of the Church was in that question raised about her cradle. It was that of her diffusion and of her liberty. Was she to expand in the lap of the universe, and, in spreading herself, to enfranchise herself from the trammels imposed upon her by the rites of the Mosaic law? Was true Christianity to be naught else but Israelitism, as is now pretended by the French Synagogue?

[21] Acts xi. 1.

[22] *Philosophoumena*, Edit. Miller, Oxford, 1851, p. 303. This book is attributed by some to St. Hippolytus, Martyr; by others to Origen. It was brought from Greece in 1841 by M. Mynoïde Minas, and published at Oxford ten years after by Mr. Miller.

Had Paul and John "distorted the character of the teaching of Jesus, Paul by destroying the law and by preaching Hellenism, John by preaching Hellenism with Gnosticism, as they still say, and were both but Anti-Jesus?"[23]

The Lord had previously resolved the question. John had noted it, and soon he was to write that Jesus Christ "was the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." He knew that the time was approaching when the faithful "would no longer adore him only upon Mount Garizim or in Jerusalem," but "wherein God would receive from the whole universe the worship in spirit and in truth." He knew that the Good Shepherd had other sheep dispersed without the sheepfold of Israel, and that it was necessary to go in search of them to make of them one flock under one sole Shepherd. That sheepfold, everywhere throughout St. John, is the world. It is the world which God has so loved as to give as its Saviour his only-begotten Son. It is the world which he came to illumine by his light, and which he would, in fact, have inundated with brightness had that world not wickedly preferred darkness. It is the world which "knew how much the Son loves the Father when it saw him die to do his will." Finally, it is "into the world that he sends his Apostles, as he himself was sent by the Father. And, said he, the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him."

The abolition of the law, in its ceremonies, was a consequence of that universality of the Christian Church. From the moment wherein God was to embrace the

[23] See Letter of M. Rodrigues, Secretary of the Israelitish Scientific Society, in the *Correspondant*, "The Hebrew Crisis in France," January 25, 1868, pp. 176, 177; Michaud.

world, it was unfitting to shackle her by the trammels imposed upon the ancient Synagogue to enchain her to the Temple and to enslave her in legality.

No conflict upon that subject existed amongst the Apostles. The only point regarding which some hesitation was manifested in the bosom of the primitive apostolate was the measure and the time wherein it was best to suppress the rites thereof.

It was to put an end to these dissensions that the Apostles assembled in a body, which was the first council of the Christian Church. It was held in the city of Jerusalem, in a place which the Fathers believe to be the cenæculum, in the year 81 of the Incarnation.

There were three different classes of Jews, all three participating, though unequally, in the prerogatives as also in the hopes of the people of God.[24] They were, firstly, the *Jews by birth*, proud of styling themselves yet children of Abraham. They were, secondly, the proselyte Jews, *proselytes of justice*, admitted to Judaism through circumcision and the legal practices. A third class of initiated were known by the name of *proselytes of the gate*, because these latter could not go beyond the gate of the Temple for prayer. Freed from the observance of the ceremonial law and of circumcision, they were held only to the precepts of the natural law, to abstinence from the use of strangled meats, and to faith in a Messias Reparator, who was to open to mankind the kingdom of heaven.

It was to the last category of believers that the council assimilated the new converts. It interdicted them the contact of idolatry and of impurity; that was the natural law. It forbade them strangled meats and the blood of animals; that was the discipline of that time and of that place, and the final link destined still to unite the Synagogue and the

[24] See Döllinger, Jew and Gentile, London ed. vol. ii.

Church. But these disciplinary dispositions were essentially temporary. They became superfluous the day whereon all dissidents should become united, like a scaffolding which we tear down when the edifice is built.

Such was the sense in which was drawn up the letter to the Christians of Antioch, promulgating the decrees of the council.[25] Primitive religion, that of the patriarchs, had commenced by being a domestic religion; that of the Jews was a national religion. The council opened the era of a catholic religion—that is to say, universal—as it bears the name in the true Church. Thus was inaugurated that third age of the world, and the last residue of Jewish Christianity, hidden in the deserts or concealed among the mountains, was lost under the shades of Ebionism; a century later not a vestige of it was to be found.

But in that age it was a difficult task, a labor of circumspection, of patience, and of gentleness, to bring together opposite parties and to fuse Hellenism with Judaism. That is the work which history attributes to St. John. The Apostle had assisted at the Council of Jerusalem. But his personality was effaced before the authority of St. Peter, and no discourse of his is mentioned. His thought is in his life, his doctrine is in his book. Yesterday he broke down the barrier of prejudice and of resentment which separated Samaria from Jerusalem; to-morrow Grecian Asia will behold him opening to every race the flowing springs of eternal life. He is the preacher of the New Law, of the new commandment, as he expresses it, and we remark throughout his whole Gospel that Christian emancipation has no more liberal apostle than himself.

But he was the disciple of Him who would not trample under foot the broken reed, who would not quench the smoking flax; and the same tradition which shows him to

[25] Acts xv. 23.

us preaching the law of liberty represents him as a religious observer of the law of his fathers, in so far as was compatible with the new order.[26] It is related, for example, that he had retained the custom of celebrating Easter the fourteenth day of Nisan (our March and April), according to the Jewish rite; and when a discussion arose upon that point in the second century, the bishops of Asia justified themselves in so doing by his example.[27] It was the Christian Easter, the redeeming immolation of the true Lamb, which the disciple celebrated; but by thus solemnizing it upon that great Jewish festival he made remembrance of the old alliance, whilst yet proclaiming its abrogation. In the same manner, as we shall soon perceive, according to the testimony of Polycrates in Eusebius, he wears upon his forehead the plate of gold worn by the ancient high-priest in the Temple. That was once more a homage to the rites of Judaism; but St. Jerome observes that he did it in quality of pontiff of Jesus Christ, who had consecrated him priest upon his heart.[28]

The like character of conciliation and of condescension distinguishes his Gospel. If the school of Tübingen has lied in history by inventing within the bosom of the Apostolic Church a chimerical division, she has no less deceived herself in considering the fourth Gospel as a manifesto of peace well calculated to terminate the ancient dissensions of the Jews and the Hellenists. In the same discourse to the Samaritan woman wherein John shows Jesus proclaiming that worship should be no more enchained to such a place or such a rite, he quotes these words: "Salvation is

[26] "Apostoli Petrus et Jacobus, et Joannes, religiose agebant circa dispositionem legis quæ est secundum Moysen."—S. Iren. *C. Hæres.* iii. 12.

[27] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* v. 23.

[28] "Ἔτι δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης ὃς ἐγενήθη ἱερεὺς τὸ πέταλον πεθορηκώς."—Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 31. Item S. Hieronym. *De Scriptor Eccles.*, xlv.)

of the Jews."[29] Is not that simple saying the full recognition of the rights of the ancient alliance? The Gnosis, which saw in the Old Law of the Jews the work of the evil principle, would never have altered it; and it withdraws from the Gospel of St. John the slightest suspicion of even the most mitigated Gnosticism.

Vainly, therefore, have they sought to establish between the writings justly attributed to St. John and the Apostle himself the incompatibility of doctrines and of tendencies which still form the thesis of modern Germany.[30] John is indeed the same everywhere, in his life and in his book. Where they have sought to discern opposition of thoughts there is but the gentle, conciliating spirit which makes itself all to all to gain all to God. John is the man in whom the grandeurs of the country of the past find place beside the affections of the land of the future. The Apocalypse will be the supreme glorification of those remembrances mingled with those hopes. The adoration of the Word, the calling of all nations to grace and to glory, the eternal sacrifice offered in all places as well as in all ages, will there recall the universalist theology of the fourth Gospel; but at the end, when John wishes to portray the crowning of things in glory, it will be Jerusalem which will appear to him brilliant with light, and the twelve tribes will be the symbol and the first-fruits of the catholicity of the triumphant Church.

IV.

Shortly after the Council the apostles proceeded to apportion the world amongst themselves. It would be impossible to fix with exactitude either the place or the time

[29] John iv. 22. [30] Schenkel and Strauss have recently revived it.

of that last and definitive separation. Baronius and Tillemont have long endeavored to assign the date, but without producing any decisive authority. Must we not conclude, therefore, and is it not more probable, that the departure of the brethren took place successively and with no solemnity, each Apostle going whither he was called by the Holy Ghost and by the necessity of nations?

However, some writers have woven a species of dramatic representation around that division, that adieu, and that dispersion. The congress meets in Gethsemani itself, under the olive-trees. Peter presides. He addresses the assembly; and, turning toward the four points of heaven, he designates to each of his brethren the province which he is to conquer.[31] God does surround his great actions with such pomp; and if we require an account of that memorable day, I far prefer that of Lucius, which represents to us Mary, filled with the plenitude of the Spirit of Pentecost, seated between Peter and John as the honorary president of that Council,[32] whilst whatever earth possessed of hearts to heal, of ignorance to enlighten, and of crimes to pardon, turned toward them to say: Come to cure us!

That done, they set out. Annalists likewise describe the final adieu to the places dwelt in and blessed by Jesus, the parting prayer of James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, the blessing bestowed by Mary upon the missionaries, the last communion in the breaking of bread, the hurried departure of Lazarus, of Martha, and of Mary upon the frail bark which was to land them at Marseilles, then the final em-

[31] "Factum est, post assumptionem Domini nostri Jesu Christi Filii Dei vivi in cœlum, ut congregarentur discipuli in Gethsemani, quibus dixit Petrus," etc.—Procheri, *Liber de Vita, Miraculis et Assumptione B. Joannis Apostoli*, in Bibliotheca Magna Veterum Patrum, t. xii. p. 107; Parisiis, in fol., 1664.)

[32] Lucii Dextri *Chronicon*, Lugduni, 1627.

brace, and at last one morning, at sunrise, the twelve travellers abandoning the city, and each one disappearing for ever behind the holy mountains.

St. Chrysostom insinuates that St. Peter and St. John, more closely united in love, likewise felt more sadly than the rest the necessary sacrifice of that separation. He deems that it was for that event that Jesus had sought to prepare them beforehand when he said to Peter: "If I will that that man tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me!" As if he had intended to say: "Couldst thou not exist apart from that dear companion? Couldst thou not make that painful sacrifice for me? Leave him to do his work, and accomplish thine own." [33]

But Peter and John understood it. Though their bodies were separated, their souls remained united with each other "in the bond of charity," which was long to connect the East and the West, of which they were about to become the first apostles! Why did schism come to sever that ancient tie? Wherefore do the churches of Asia, dead in separating themselves from the source of life, lie still in that desolation which overwhelmed with sorrow the great heart of Fénelon? Why comes not the day of resurrection for that East, a prey to all barbarians? Rome extends to her her arms; and may we not hope again to see John approach Peter, and give him a friendly grasp?

Which was, in fact, the portion which fell to John in that division? Between the Taurus and the banks of that famous river whereon Scripture locates the terrestrial Paradise stretches a vast country, in whose bosom revolved for

[33] "Hoc autem faciebat Jesus ut intempestivum illum mutuum affectum tolleret. Quia enim orbis terrarum curam suscepturi erant, non ita copulari eos oportebat: alioquin magnum hinc futurum erat orbi detrimentum. Quamobrem ait illi: Opus tibi commissum est, hoc cura, hoc perfice, pugna, decerta. Quid enim si velim eum sic manere? Tu tua cura et provideas."—S. Chrysost. *in Joan. Homil. ultima*, lxxxviii.

more than three thousand years the destinies of the world. The East, parent of light, had likewise been the predestined cradle of all great things, both human and divine. Fallen empires had there left noble ruins; finished histories preserved there great souvenirs; a dazzling sky was there—however, less ardent than souls; and in the very midst of error a profound mysticism recalled the land of primitive revelations and of holy visions. In less distant times it was still Asia which had witnessed the aurora of two names which history elevates above all others. By dispersing the Jews and giving full liberty to the Synagogue, Cyrus had disseminated throughout his vast states the leaves of the holy books, and thus propagated the primordial doctrine of the unity of God. In dreaming the unity of one sole country, of one civilization, of one same philosophy, Alexander at least had founded from the Indus to the Nile the unity of language. That was to be the tongue of St. Paul and of John. In the counsels of God these great men had tilled that ground, merely that truth might be sown therein profusely by "the sowers of words," as the Athenians styled the Apostles. Thus the Oriental world, then the Hellenic world, finally the Roman world, had heard the cry of the precursors: "*Parate vias!* Make ready the way!" Then, the roads being open, the conquerors set forth.

CHAPTER XI.

ST. JOHN AND MARY—THE ASSUMPTION.

I.

ST. JOHN did not at once repair to his Diocese of Asia. A sweet and sacred duty attached him to Judea, where he was detained near the Mother of God, become his own by the divine legacy of the Cross. Thus, notwithstanding the hidden charm of the legend which represents Mary as dwelling at Ephesus, criticism must renounce that supposition, plainly irreconcilable with tradition, with chronology, and with history.[1] According to

[1] That opinion, abandoned at present, rests solely on a text of the synodal letter wherein the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus, in 431, enumerating the splendors of that city, speak of them as follows: "Ἔνθα ὁ θεόλογος Ἰωάννης, καὶ ἡ θεοτόκος παρθένος, ἡ ἁγία Μαρία"—"There John the theologian and the holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God . . ." The verb is wanting; but it has been gratuitously supplied by the word *reside*, which nothing here warrants. Is there not rather question of the two celebrated sanctuaries of John and of Mary, which were, in fact, the two great churches of that metropolis? (See the Abbé Hir, *Religious Essays*, August 15, 1866.) In the second place, that opinion is formally contradicted by St. Epiphanius, who says: "When John resolved to set out for Asia, no document affirms that he was accompanied by the Blessed Virgin." Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus in the second century, vaunting the glories of his Church in a letter addressed to Pope St. Victor, mentions neither the abode nor the tomb of Mary, although he speaks of the sojourn made there by St. John. The Fathers, as we shall see, are unanimous in placing at Jerusalem the death and the burial of the Mother of God. Vainly do some authors, without furnishing any reasons, seem inclined to bring Mary to Ephesus. Baronius hesitates; Benedict XIV. dares not pronounce; Tillemont, perplexed, is constrained to have recourse to the strange hypothesis of the successive sojourns of John and of Mary in the city of Ephesus. It is the wrongly-interpreted text of the letter of the council which caused him all that embarrassment. But he is himself struck by the absolute chronological impossibility of his opinion.

impartial and severe truth, Mary lived and died in Jerusalem.[2] By that hypothesis, the only one consecrated by facts, she did not quit the places rendered so dear to her by the footprints of her Son. There, in the Holy City, mother country of the faith and rendezvous of the brethren, she remained with John until her dying hour, readily receiving, as tradition declares, the visits of the disciples, and bidding them farewell. Then there also she descends, but for a short time, into the tomb which was not to keep her remains; and we thus easily understand how, according to St. Jerome, the cenotaph of the Virgin was venerated in the Valley of Josaphat, on the very spot where it is found by travellers of our own day, and where pilgrims still venerate it.

What was the life of Mary and of the beloved Apostle in the humble home whither John had conducted her upon descending from Calvary? No account has reached us; and I know not even if any human language could worthily repeat that conversation which was in heaven. Bossuet despairs of so doing. "To tell you," he exclaims, "what were the occupations and the discourses of Mary during her pilgrimage, is a thing which no man should undertake. Who could describe the impetuosity of that mu-

Here is his conclusion, which condemns himself: "We could not believe that St. John made any lengthened stay at Ephesus before the year 65, at the earliest; and supposing that the Blessed Virgin was fifteen years of age when she gave birth to the Lord, four years before the vulgar era, she would then be eighty-four years old, and there is certainly little or no likelihood that she went to Ephesus at so great an age."—Tillemont, *Hist. Eccl.*, t. i., note, p. 467.

[2] "Hæc est inclyta civitas David, arx Ecclesiarum, hæc est habitaculum apostolorum. In hac cum ille Theologus accepisset Deiparam, subministrabat ei quibus opus habebat. In hac vitam egit Dei mater, postquam surrexit Filius a mortuis. . . ."—S. Joann. Damasc., *Sermo de Dormitione Deiparæ.* Melit. Sardens. Episc. II apud Bibliothec. Patrum., t. ii. p. 202. *Liber de Transitu SS. Virginis Deiparæ.* (St. Jerome questions the historical value of that book.)

tual love, in which concurred all the tenderness of nature, all the efficaciousness of grace? It is certain, my Christian brethren, that we may indeed form some gross idea of all those miracles; but to conceive the ardor, the vehemence, of those torrents of flames which flowed from Jesus over Mary, and from Mary returned continually to Jesus—believe me, the seraphim, all burning as they are, could not do it."[3]

Augustine, at Ostia, seated beside his mother, and contemplating the sky above the Tyrrhenian Sea; St. Benedict and his sister, passing a stormy night conversing together upon the things of the next life, at the foot of a mountain, can give but a slight idea of those familiar colloquies wherein Jesus was everything, and over which hovered the invisible presence of Him who had said: "Where two or more of you are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of you." "They prayed," says Fénelon, "and they thus changed into society of pure faith the visible society which they had lost. Admirable prayers, wherein Mary consoled herself by the sweet remembrance of all the tenderness which her divine Son had shown towards her; prayers wherein she spoke to him, although she was no longer able to see him; prayers in which she expressed to him, more by her tears than by her words, her love, her grief, and her desire to hasten the close of an absence so sad and so hard to endure."[4]

That is the consolation of all mourning souls. They are suddenly separated; the heart is solitary and the hearth is desolate; they sit sadly beside the tomb; and in place of the perfumes so lately poured over the beloved feet, naught remains save the melancholy and dismal aroma of the sepulchre. It is the better part of their life which has

[3] Bossuet, *Sermon I. for the Assumption*, first part.

[4] Fénelon, *Sermon for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin*.

winged its flight towards the land of the living, and they remain alone here below, their eyes fixed upon that city of hope, whither they have sent all that they loved, all that merited their affection. But the communion of saints is larger than this earth; for it embraces all worlds. Souls have no place, and they never quit one another. Distant as we may suppose them, they can rejoin one another by means of two wings ever ready to spread—hope and remembrance. Then there is prayer, the altar, and communion; and is there not for all a vast country in the heart of our God?

That was the rendezvous of John and of Mary. They are portrayed as retracing together the road which the Lord had marked with his blood, thus inaugurating the beautiful devotion of all loving souls towards the Way of the Cross. But there is a still more lovely picture of their holy society. In leaving us, and in order not to quit us entirely, God had performed that miracle of rendering himself eternally present to those whom he had loved. He specially owed it to his mother's affection. Like John, like the apostles, "Mary persevered in the breaking of bread"; and it is no fiction which represents to us the Virgin kneeling before the altar while St. John gives her the Host, and repeats to her the words which the Lord had addressed to her from the cross: "Woman, behold thy Son!"

Beside them and with them dwelt James the Less, who was, during thirty years, Bishop of Jerusalem. His life was, even in the midst of that primitive Church, so perfectly beautiful, so elevated, so pure, and so exceptional in its sanctity, that he seemed created expressly for the society of Mary and of St. John. The predilections of sacred history are all for that son of Cleophas, whom ties of relationship, mentioned in the Gospel, bound to Joseph and to the Mother of God. He was the nephew of Mary. There

are even some Fathers of the Oriental Church, and the most reliable amongst that body—Origen, Epiphanius, and Gregory of Nyssa—who inform us that James, while yet a child, had been educated beside Jesus, by the care of the Virgin.[5] At least, it is certain that he was tenderly beloved by Jesus Christ. He was not ungrateful towards the august relative whom he cherished as a brother and adored as a God. Full of faith in his word, when he saw him expire he publicly showed himself so assured of beholding him upon the day prophesied that he made, says St. Jerome, the vow to eat nothing ere witnessing his resurrection. Therefore Jesus glorified had honored him by one of his first visits, which St. Paul mentions.[6] He had appeared to him, adds St. Jerome, had seated himself at his table, and there, taking bread, he had blessed it for him, saying to him: "Eat, my beloved brother, because the Son of Man is risen from the dead."[7]

St. Jerome further tells us that the Lord had then communicated to his friend the gift of eminent science, which

[5] His mother was named Mary: "There were also women, among whom was Mary the mother of James the Less" (Mark xv. 40; xvi. 1). That Mary, according to St. Jerome (Ep. 150), is the same who is styled by St. John, Mary wife of Cleophas, sister to the Blessed Virgin (John xix. 25). Thus, St. James would be, as St. Paul names him (Galat. i. 19), the brother—that is to say, the cousin—of the Lord, and the nephew of the Blessed Virgin. (Item Theodoret. *in Galat.* i. 19, p 268; S. Chrysost. *in Galat.* p. 801.) James the Less is likewise styled son of Cleophas and son of Alpheus, these two names being identical, according to St. Augustine and Bede (*in Marc* lib. i. c. xvi. oper. t. v. p. 113). Now, according to Hegesippus, that Cleophas was brother to St. Joseph (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. xi. and iv. xxii.) That was another tie of relationship recognized by St. Jerome and by St. Chrysostom. See M. de Valroger, *Introd.* t. ii. p. 346 et sq.; and Tillemont, *Memoirs for Eccles. Hist.*, vol. i. Epiphan. *Hær.* lxxviii. cap. xiii. Origen, *in Cels.* l.b. i. p. 35. Greg. Nyss. *de Resurrect.* ii. p. 473.

[6] Galat. i. 19.

[7] "Dominus ivit ad Jacobum et apparuit ei. . . . Tulit panem et benedixit ac fregit, et dedit Jacobo justo, et dixit ei: Frater mi, comede panem tuum, quia resurrexit Filius hominis a mortuis."—S. Hieronym. *Lib. de Scriptor. Eccles.*, *in Jacobo*, t. i. Juxta Evangelium secundum Hebræos.

rendered him one of the lights of the infant Church. But it was his purity and his charity especially which made him more like to John and to Mary. The historian Hegesippus, the most ancient of all cited by St. Jerome and by Eusebius, relates that he was a virgin, consecrated to the Lord from his mother's womb, entirely detached from this world, and living only for the next.[8] He had always, from his earliest childhood, been a rigorous follower of the rule of the Nazarites, abstaining from all flesh, drinking only water, and practising in the bosom of the family of Jesus the penance which John the Baptist preached in the desert. He was, like St. John, the apostle of charity. "My brethren," he wrote, "beware of detracting one another. He that detracteth his brother or that judgeth his brother detracteth the law and judgeth the law, which shall one day judge him. Religion clean and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation: and to keep one's self unspotted from this world."[9]

Thus that name of Just which he bears in the Gospel was unanimously bestowed upon him by Jews as well as by Christians. Witnesses of his virtue, the Jews attributed to him the salvation of the city, styling him, it is even said, "the bulwark of his nation."[10] "In a year of drought," says St. Epiphanius, "scarcely had the saint raised his hands towards heaven when rain came to water the earth." The Talmud itself testifies that the Jew Eligazer had been cured of the bite of a serpent by the prayer of James and

[8] Apud Euseb., lib. ii. c. i. et vii. 19. Apud Epiph. *Hær.* lxxviii. n. 14. Chrysost. *in Acta Apostol. Homil.* v. n. 3, app. t. vii. p. 78. "Hic de utero matris sanctus fuit, vinum et ciceram non bibit, etc. . . . Huic soli licitum erat ingredi sancta sanctorum; siquidem vestibus laneis non utebatur, sed lineis; solusque ingrediebatur templum; et fixis genibus pro populo deprecabatur."—Hegesip., apud S Hieronym. *Ex Catalago Scriptor. Eccles.*

[9] James i. 27.

[10] Ὠβλιὰς περιόχη λαοῦ.

in the name of Jesus.[11] Finally, Josephus speaks of him with a species of worship, attributing to his death all the woes of his nation. A virtue issued from him, and I know not what reflection of the physiognomy of the Just Man *par excellence* rested upon that just and saintly pontiff and pastor of the Church of the Cenacle, so truly worthy of being, like St. John, of the kindred and of the society of the Mother of God.

St. Ignatius the Martyr also formed part of that holy company, if we may credit his letters written to St. John, now unanimously rejected by criticism, but quoted in the Middle Ages by St. Bernard, as also by Denis the Carthusian.[12]

We prefer to believe those epistles authentic. We see therein the youthful saint learning the Gospel mysteries at the feet of the beloved Apostle, and Mary confirming in that energetic as well as virginal soul the lessons which were to prepare it for martyrdom. We there behold that Virgin "assisting the unhappy, consoling the afflicted, reuniting within herself the tenderness of human nature with the holiness of angelic nature."[13] Finally, we hear Ignatius, later become the Apostle of Antioch, beg to revisit the city of Jerusalem and the Holy Family.

"Who would not rejoice," we read in a letter addressed to St. John—"who would not rejoice to behold and to converse with her who bore within her womb the true God?

[11] Apud Baron. *Annal. Eccl.*, ad an. 63, § 8.

[12] S. Bernard, *Serm.* vii. *in Psalm.* ix. Dionys. Carthus. *in Commentar in Dionys. Areopagit. de Divinis Nominibus.*

[13] The authenticity of these letters is discussed in Cotellier, *Patres Ævi Apostol.*, t. i. Tillemont, *Memoirs Eccl. Hist.*, t. ii. p. 192. Baron *Annal. Eccl.*, an 109, § 31. They are generally reputed apocryphal. "Maria miseris et afflictus condolet coafflicta, et subvenire non pigrescit. In Maria matre Jesu humanæ naturæ natura sanctitatis angelicæ sociatur."—*Epist. S. Ignat.* in Bibliotheca Maxima Patrum, t. i. p. 75.

"I would also see the venerable James, surnamed the Just, so like to Jesus in his life, in his conversation, and even in feature, that he might be taken for the twin brother of the Lord. In beholding him I shall seem to see the very face of Christ Jesus.

"Finally, I desire to see all the men and women, saints of God. What hinders me, what detains me hither? My good master, command me to come to you." [14]

Doubtless it would be sweet thus to penetrate into the life of Mary and to be enabled to contemplate closely that ideal of human perfection. However, the true sign and special excellence of that perfection is precisely to remain hidden, and is, in its hidden obscurity, the best example and the highest instruction for the world.

Meanwhile Mary also had her reserved part in the testimony of the truth. To the personal remembrances which might become effaced or perverted the Son of God inspired the disciples to substitute the written account of his history. It was during that time that the Gospels were drawn up—the first three at least—and Mary could not have ignored it. Besides being the most continual witness of an existence of which nothing had escaped her, there were special facts of the life of Jesus the knowledge whereof was personal to his mother, and consequently the account thereof in the Gospels argues her manifest and necessary co-operation.

Who other than Mary, and likewise who better than she, could have made known the mystery of the Incarna-

[14] "Quem enim non delectet videre eam et alloqui quæ verum Deum de se peperit, si nostræ sit fidei et religionis amicus? Similiter et illum venerabilem Jacobum qui cognominatur Justus, quem referunt Christo Jesu simillimum facie et vita et modo conversationis, ac si fratur esset gemellus? Quem dicunt si videro, video ipsum secundum omnia corporis ejus lineamenta Christum Jesum. Præterea cæteros sanctos et sanctas. Hic quid moror? Cur detineor? Bone præceptor, properare me jubeas et valeas."—*Epist. S. Ignat.*, ibid. p. 73.

tion, of the Annunciation; the promises of the angel; the visit to Elizabeth; the hymn with which God that day inspired her; the manger of Bethlehem; the adoration of the angels, of the shepherds, and of the magi; the presentation in the Temple; the canticle of Simeon; the flight into Egypt; and the finding of the child Jesus amid the doctors?—all things whereof Mary alone held the secret. "She had kept them, pondering them *in her heart*," observes the Evangelist who has related them, as if by these words he sought to indicate whence the knowledge thereof had been so directly and faithfully transmitted to him.

That remark is from St. Luke;[15] and it is he especially, he almost solely, who has constituted himself the historian of that early period of the life of Jesus. Of the three writers who are styled synoptical, it is he likewise who seems to have held more personal relations with the Mother of God. What, for example, is better known than the tradition which represents St. Luke, painter and Evangelist, reproducing the august features of Mary? He himself has related, in his Acts of the Apostles, that, having reached Jerusalem, he had gone to visit James, and had there come into immediate contact with the Holy Family.[16] Now, who could have been his informant save Mary? He does not name her; but St. Irenæus, Eusebius, and later St. Jerome, represent him to us receiving his inspirations, not merely from St. Paul, his master, but from the early witnesses of the life of the Lord.[17] If, as all leads us to believe, Mary was of that number, and foremost amongst those who enriched the history of Jesus Christ, it is, then, rightly that the Catholic Church styles her Queen of Evangelists;

[15] Luke ii. 51. [16] Acts xxi. 17, 18.

[17] Λουκᾶς... τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, ὃ καὶ χαρᾶξαι μαρτύρεται, καθὰ παρέδοντο αὐτῷ οἱ ἀπ'ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπήρεται τοῦ λόγου.—Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 4. St. Iren. *adv. Hær.*, iii. x. p. 1. St. Hieronym. *de Vita Illustr.*, c. vii. St. Chrysost. *in Matth. Hom.* i. n. 3.

and a more tender sentiment mingles with our adoration when, reading those holy pages, we reflect that they may have been inspired by that heart, and that a divine Mother has dictated these memoirs upon the childhood of her Son.

Now, can it be that the society of Mary had no influence upon the Gospel of St. John? Could the Evangelist who was most dear to her have been the only one not to have experienced the benefit of her intercourse? Must not that penetration into the mysteries of faith, those profound intuitions of the soul of his divine Master, which so astonish us in the apostle, have had their origin in Mary? The continual saying of St. John, "God has so loved the world!" must have constantly formed the subject of the conversations between Mary and the disciple of Jesus, as filling all the pages of his Gospel. Origen clearly hints this when he says: "That Gospel is so confidential that he alone could have discerned its bearing who reposed upon the breast of Jesus and *inherited his mother*." [18]

Let those hear these things who can read deeply in the writings of God, under the luminous interpretation of his glance, in those recollected vigils wherein the heart lends the ear and distinguishes every voice. They may then comprehend that, if that Gospel be the focus of such brightness and such fervor, it is because therein are converged the rays of all the most admirable works of God in the spiritual order—the genius of a friend and the heart of a mother.

II.

Meanwhile Mary's life was no longer on earth. As there are large plants whose roots, more and more spreading, finally burst the vase which serves as their prison, in

[18] "Cujus sensum percipere nemo potest nisi qui supra pectus Jesu recubuerit, vel acceperit a Jesu Mariam."—Orig. *in Joan.*, op. t. ii. p. 6, A.

like manner there are great souls who secretly undermine and end by noiselessly parting their envelope, which can no longer contain them. The primitive Church has preserved to us a remembrance of what was, at that period of her life, the physiognomy of the Mother of God. She was already like a heavenly apparition descended upon the earth. "In every action," said of her the historian Nicephorus, quoting St. Epiphanius, "she evinced gravity, dignity, and honor; speaking little, and only when it was necessary; willingly listening to others; gentle, humble, and affable, rendering to every one the respect they deserved. She ignored laughter, trouble, and anger; but wickedness caused her horror. Her eyes were brilliant, but dimmed and hollowed from weeping; her hands transparent and bloodless; all her features sharpened by constant suffering." [19] That was a new style of immaterial beauty, a mixture of gentleness and of strength, of resignation and of hope, which is nothing else but the form of the soul, and which was to become the peculiar physiognomy of the saints.

"In similar sadness," as Bossuet observes, "it was a true miracle which enabled Mary to live separated from her well-beloved Son. Her love for him was so strong, so ardent, and so inflamed that it uttered no sigh which was not calculated to burst all the bonds of her body. It formed no regret which must not have disturbed all its harmony; it wafted no desire towards heaven which must not have drawn with it the soul of Mary."

One day the soul parted. "How did it happen that love gave her the death-stroke? It was when it, so constantly increasing, arrived at such perfection that earth was no longer capable of containing it. 'Go, my son,' said the Grecian king, 'extend thy conquests afar; my kingdom is too contracted to retain thee.' O love of the Blessed Vir-

[19] Nicephor. Callist. *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. ii. cap. ii.

gin! thy perfection is too eminent; thou canst no longer be confined within a mortal body; thy fire sends forth too vivid flames to smoulder beneath those ashes. Go, shine in eternity; go, burn before the face of God; go, lose thyself in his immense bosom, which alone is capable of containing thee." [20]

The blessed death of the Mother of God took place some years after the dispersion of the Apostles. It would be difficult to fix the exact epoch. Baronius places it in the year 48, the sixth of Claudius, the fourth of the pontificate of St. Peter, fourteen years after the Passion, under the consulate of C. Valerius Asiaticus and of M. Valerius Messala. He bases it upon a passage of the Chronicle of Eusebius, suppressed by Scaliger, and of which Tillemont questions the authority.[21]

Nicephorus, a Greek monk of the fourteenth century, is of the same opinion. Amid the various accounts which have reached us of that glorious decease, his appears to us to unite the general features which constitute history and which disengage it from legend. His likewise has the best guarantee of authenticity, if it be true that he owes it to ancient documents emanated from the very places which were the theatre of the death of Mary. He assures us, in fact, that the account had come to him from Bishop Juvenalis, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who, four centuries after the Assumption, had made a solemn report of it to Pulcheria, wife of the Emperor Marcian, when the latter was seeking the body of the Mother of God to deposit it in the church recently constructed by her, in honor of the Virgin, in the quarter of Blachernes.[22]

[20] Bossuet, *Sermon Ist for the Feast of the Assumption*, first part.

[21] Baron. *Annal Eccl.*, an. 48. Tillemont, *Eccl. Hist.*, t. i. note xiv. upon the Blessed Virgin.

[22] Τοὶ δὲ καιροῦ ἐπιστάντος, ἐν τῇ Σιὼν σκίμποδος ἀνεκλίνετο. Καὶ παρῆν μὲν Ἰωάννης ὁ τάυτην εἰσοκισάμενος, καὶ ὅσον ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις διαφανές· ἄι τε φίλαι καὶ

Here is what he tells us:

"In those days an angel was sent to Mary by her Son, in order to warn her that the time was near to return to him, as an angel had formerly given her notice that God was to come to her.

"Having learned through him that her day was at hand, her heart was filled with very great joy; and, having made it known to her friends and to her relatives, she prepared herself for her final passage. Then, soon after, she was forced to take to her bed in the dwelling she occupied upon Mount Sion.

"There was St. John, who had sheltered her, and with him all the illustrious Christians living in Jerusalem, who were attached to Mary either by relationship, by veneration, or by friendship.

"Then Mary gave orders to the virgin disciple and to the others assisting to distribute her two tunics to those of the widows in her vicinity who had testified the most affection towards her.

"Hearing her speak in that manner, all shed abundant tears over the solitude wherein they would be left by the departure of Mary.

"Finally, her divine Son descended from the highest heavens, with the innumerable army of holy angels, to receive that wholly celestial soul.

"The Apostles likewise had assembled from all parts, and Mary, seeing them gathered around her with lighted

γένει προσήκουσαι. Καὶ τῷ παρθένῳ σὺν ἄλλοις ἡ πάρθενος ἐπέταττε, τοὺς δύο ταύτης χιτῶνας ταῖς ἐκ γειτόνων χήραις . . . παραχεῖν. Δακρύων ἐπὶ τούτοις χύσις ἔρρει πόλλη, τὴν ἐκείνης στέρησιν πάντων ὀδυρομένων. Εἶτα κάτεισι μὲν οὐρανόθεν ὁ ταύτης υἱὸς σὺν ἀγγέλων ἀπείρῳ στρατῷ, Ψυχὴν ἐκείνης τὴν ὄντως Θείαν ἀναληψόμενος, κ. τ. λ. Τὸ πάνσεμνον καὶ ἡλίου καθαρώτερον διατεμένη καί χηματίσασα σῶμα· "Γένοιτό μοι αὖθις κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα σου," ἐπείπουσα ταῖς ἐκείνου φίλαις χέρσιν, ὡς ἐν ὕπνῳ παρατίθησι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐκείνην ψυχήν.—Nicephori Callisti *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. ii. cap. xi. p. 168; Paris, in fol., 1830.

torches, bade them adieu with great gladness, giving thanks to her Son.

"Then she fell back, dying, upon her bed, joined her hands gravely and religiously, and, decently disposing her venerable body, purer than the sun, 'Be it done unto me according to thy word,' said she, and forthwith seemed to fall asleep.

"Thus did she yield up her blessed soul, surrounded by all those who were most dear to her."

An eye-witness, Denis the Areopagite, or the very ancient author of the works which bear his name, celebrating the glory of his master Hierotheus, completes this recital by the following passage:

"We came," says that writer, "with him, and many others amongst the brethren, to contemplate the sacred body which had produced life and brought forth God. There all the pontiffs, each in his turn, celebrated the almighty power of God, who had clothed himself with our infirmity. In that moment Hierotheus surpassed all the other priests of the assembly. He appeared ravished, transported, beside himself, by the spectacle of the marvels whereof he was witness. And those who heard him on that day regarded him as a man inspired by heaven and the worthy panegyrist of the Divinity. But wherefore relate to you what was uttered in that glorious assembly? Let us leave those mystical conversations, which should not be divulged to the profane; all eloquence sounds feeble after that of my master." [23]

"Meanwhile, the Apostles and those who were present," continues Nicephorus, "encircled the body of the Blessed One, which they buried religiously.

[23] St. Denis *On the Divine Names*, ch. iii. n. 2, p. 368, of the translation of Mgr. Darboy, Archbishop of Paris.

"The blind received sight thereby, hearing was restored to the deaf, the paralytics received the use of their limbs, and the sick were healed by its touch.

"Her obsequies were celebrated. They bore torches before her, they burned incense, they strewed flowers; the angels of heaven preceded and followed her bier.

"The Fathers and the Apostles recited marvellous hymns, and, borne by the hands of the disciples themselves, that Ark of Spiritual Alliance advanced from Sion to Gethsemani.

"Reaching Gethsemani, she was there, like her Son, laid in the sepulchre. But that Son drew her thence to transport her to Paradise, wherein is planted the tree of life, and where she still is for designs known to God, who has done thus." [24]

III.

Mary did not, therefore, remain in the tomb. Undoubtedly her Assumption is not a dogma which the Church imposes upon our faith; [25] but it is a belief which comes from her heart, and which has its theological reason in the double privilege of the immaculate conception and of the divine maternity of the Virgin.

"She was incorruptible because she was pure," explains the Bishop of Meaux. "God came into that flesh charmed by its purity; he loved it so well as to remain enclosed

[24] Ὡς δὲ καὶ τῆν Γεθσησαμῆ κατέλαβον, τάφῳ μέν . . . δέδοται, διὰ ὑίου δὲ πρὸς τὰ θεῖα σκηνώματα μετατίθεται · λὸγοις οἳς οἶδεν ὁ ταῦτα δράσας Θεός. Εν αυτῷ τῷ Θείω δηλαδὴ παραδείσω, ὅπου δὴ καὶ τὸ ξύλον πεφύτευται τῆς ζωῆς.

[25] "Porro Dei Ecclesia, in eam partem propensior videtur ut una cum carne sit in cœlum assumpta. . . . Quæ quidem sententia cum plurimorum theologorum, tum etiam communi sensu fidelium recepta videtur."—Baronius, *Note to Roman Martyrology*, August 15. Upon the Assumption of the body of Mary into heaven, see Philip and Francis Strozzi, James Gaudin, Nicol. Ladvocat; Billiard, *Repetitæ Vindiciæ pro Assumptione B. V. M.*

therein nine months, to incorporate himself with it, to take root in it, as Tertullian expresses it. He will not, then, leave within the tomb that flesh which he has so loved, but he will transport it into heaven adorned with immortal glory."[26]

But if nothing be better proven and more founded than the belief in the Assumption of Mary, nothing can be more varied than the texts which relate it to us.

The first which treats of it is a Syrian fragment in the British Museum, upon the *Obsequies of the Virgin*, which undoubtedly dates back to the fifth century. According to that book, it is the Archangel St. Michael whom God charges to exhume the body of Mary and to transport it into the terrestrial Paradise wherein was accomplished the miracle of his resurrection.[27]

In a Coptic manuscript, recently published and translated into French, Mary demands not to fall under the sceptre of death. Therefore, immediately the destroying angel presents himself to attack her, the Mother of God takes refuge within the arms of her Son, who bears her soul to heaven, and deposits the body in the Valley of Josaphat, where it is to remain only a short time.[28]

According to the book of Melito, or that which at least is attributed to the saintly Bishop of Sardis, the Apostles beg the Lord to resuscitate his Mother, whose body is, in fact, borne by angels into heaven.[29]

[26] Bossuet, *Sermon for the Assumption.*

[27] Dr. W. Wright, *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament.* London, 1865.—Obsequies of the Holy Virgin.

[28] Zoega, *Catalogus Codicum Copticorum Musei Borgiani.* Rome, 1810, in fol., n. cxx, p. 229.—M. Dulaurier has translated that fragment into French in the collection entitled *Fragment des Revélations Apocryphes de Saint Barthélemy.* Paris, 1835.

[29] C. Tischendorf, *Apocalypses Apocryphæ.* At the end of four apocryphal apocalypses that collection gives three accounts of the death of the Blessed Virgin. The first is written in Greek and attributed to St. John the

The book which bears the name of Joseph of Arimathea contains further details: Thomas, surnamed Didymus, arrived after the death of the Mother of God; he caused the tomb to be opened, and, finding it empty, he relates that Mary appeared to him rising in the air, borne upward by angels.

That tradition is likewise followed by Nicephorus. "Meanwhile," writes he, "the Apostles were on the point of retracing their steps homeward, when one of them, who was Thomas, having arrived three days after the burial, caused the tomb to be opened, that he might view the sacred body of the Virgin.

"When it had been opened, the body was no longer to be found therein. The winding-sheets alone remained, folded and laid in one place, as had been formerly witnessed in the sepulchre of Jesus. A delicious perfume exhaled from the tomb, which the disciples reclosed with great veneration."

Nothing more of Mary remained upon earth. The mystery, therefore, was crowned in the heights of heaven. It hides itself from our eyes; but the power of eloquence and the genius of art, inspired by love, will lend us their wings to penetrate it fully.

Bossuet, with his eagle-glance, pierces the cloud, and, following that long line of prophets repeating to the triumphant Virgin the oracles thenceforth realized in herself, "For my part," he exclaims at the end of his discourse, "if I be permitted to mingle my conceptions with such august secrets, I picture to myself that Moses could not fail, beholding that Queen, to repeat that noble prophecy left us in his writings: 'A Star shall come forth from Jacob, and a branch from Israel.' Isaias, inebriated by the Spirit

Evangelist. The other two are in Latin, one under the name of St. Joseph of Arimathea, the other under that of Melito of Sardis.

of God, sings in incomprehensible ecstasy: 'Behold that Virgin who was to conceive and to bring forth a Son.' Ezechiel recognizes that closed door through which no one ever entered or went forth, because by it the Lord of battles made his entrance. And amidst them the royal prophet David sounding upon a celestial lyre that admirable canticle: 'I saw, O Prince! the Queen standing on thy right hand, in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety. All the glory of the king's daughter is within in golden borders, clothed round about with embroidery. After her shall virgins be brought to the king; they shall enter his temple with gladness and rejoicing.'

"Meanwhile, the Virgin herself kept the blessed spirits in respectful silence, drawing forth once again from the depths of her heart these excellent words: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.'

"Behold the entrance of the Blessed Virgin. The ceremony is concluded; all that sacred pomp is ended. Mary is placed upon the throne, in the arms of her Son, in the eternal midst of which St. Bernard speaks." [30]

There is but one picture which surpasses that—namely, the one wherein Fra Angelico da Fiesole has represented, a mystical ecstasy, the crowning of the Virgin by the Holy Trinity. The heavens are opened; Mary has arrived at the summit of glory; youthful angels in long robes, a flame upon their forehead, flutter around her with their brilliant purple wings; the family of Dominican saints stand below and salute her in the serene heights where she is to reign. But she does not triumph; she is recollected in the amazement of her happiness. She does not

[30] Bossuet, *Sermon for the Assumption.*

pour forth, as Bossuet supposes, the ravishing strains of the *Magnificat;* she seems rather to ask herself, as formerly on the day of the Annunciation, "How shall this be done?" But her Son answers her by himself placing the crown upon her brow. Behold, he extends his arms towards her; they will never more be separated! The family is complete; for who is that young saint in the foreground, with long, light hair, his eyes fixed upon that spectacle, and whose features, turned toward the Mother and the Son, are hidden from us? Have you not recognized the profile of St. John?

In one of the ancient manuscripts which we have mentioned it is said that Mary, just before expiring, called one of her companions and bequeathed to her her girdle. The girdle of Mary is held in great veneration in the East. It is at least the emblem of the modest virtues which she left, in dying, as a legacy to earth. That garment of penance, of chastity, and of honor which the Immaculate Virgin dropped here below whilst ascending to heaven will be caught up by thousands of other virgins, who will gird it on generously and will wear it gladly. It will embellish their lives, it will protect their youth, and from it will radiate all grace in time, all glory in eternity.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. JOHN AT EPHESUS—THE CHURCHES OF ASIA.

I.

WHEN Mary had been assumed into heaven, when all the brethren had departed, and when the Jewish land, agitated by discord, profaned by pagan immorality, weakened in its faith by the Idumæans, and in its liberty by the procurators Felix, Festus, Albinus, and later Gessius Florus, seemed to him tending toward those desolations which the Master had predicted, John resolved to quit Jerusalem in his turn, and to seek another field for the holy seed.

It was not until about the year 56 of Jesus Christ that the Apostle St. John embarked for Asia and began his sojourn at Ephesus.[1] At least it is certain that two years previously he had not yet visited that city, since the Acts, mentioning the abode St. Paul made therein at that time, say nothing regarding St. John.

A Greek of the fourth or fifth century wrote, under the borrowed name of Prochorus, an apocryphal account of the journeys of St. John. Many improbabilities disfigure that history, which the love of the marvellous too often leads astray into inventions unworthy of so noble a subject. It nevertheless retains a certain credit in the Eastern

[1] Relative to St. John's departure for Asia and Ephesus see S. Ignat. martyr *ad Ephesios;* Clem. Alexandr., apud Euseb. *Hist. Eccl*, lib. iii. c. 1; Origen. *in Genesim*, lib. iii.; S. Gregor. martyr, *Orat. ad Arian;* S. Chrysost. *Homil. I. in Joan.;* Polycrat. *ad Papam Victor*, etc.

Church, and some of the facts which it adduces seem not unfounded.

It represents to us the Apostle embarking at Joppe—which was, in fact, the great harbor of Palestine—following from preference the route already travelled by the Gospel. By that itinerary St. John, quitting Jerusalem by the suburb of Emmaus, came to Lydda, where Peter had healed the paralytic Ænaias or Eneas, who believed in the Lord. At Joppe dwelt the family of Dorcas, that young Christian resuscitated by Peter at the prayer of the poor, whom she had so loved. The Apostle found her surrounded by widows, to whom she had dedicated her new and miraculous existence. He passed several days in her house amidst the disciples. Then, a vessel coming from Alexandria having put into port, John took passage thereon and sailed for the shores of Asia Minor, which were not far distant.[2]

It is said that a tempest cast the man of God upon the very coast whereon Ephesus was built.

In that beautiful Ionia, rich in its commerce, in its memories, and in its arts, wonderfully situated between the ancient East and Europe, then become the mistress of all things, Ephesus was the most flourishing centre of that age and of that country. She owed her origin to an Athenian

[2] "Mansimus in Joppe tribus diebus in domo Tabithæ; cum autem venisset navis ab Ægypto, ascendimus ut navigaremus in Asiam."—In Prochori Περιόδῳ τοῦ Ἰωάννου, Bibl. Patrum, t. vii. p. 107. A Greek manuscript of the history of Prochorus was found in 1854 in the library of the Convent of Patmos, by M. V. Guérin, of the school of Athens, who presented a memoir upon that subject to the Institute: *Descriptions of the Isle of Patmos and of the Isle of Samos.* By V. Guérin. In 8vo. Durand, Paris, 1856. The manuscript has since been sold to the British Museum. A similar volume was likewise found in one of the monasteries of Mount Athos. That legend was translated into Latin in t. vii. of the *Magna Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, p. 107. We shall quote it with the utmost reserve, and only where it is confirmed by more reliable testimony. Nicetas, Bishop of Thessalonica, followed and completed the text of the pseudo-Prochorus. A Greek copy is also to be found in the Library of Patmos.

colony landed in that spot by Androclus, son of Codrus. She was the Athens of the Levant. Successively ruined by earthquakes and by conflagrations, rebuilt at the general expense of entire Greece, favored by Alexander, enfranchised by Augustus, proud of her pleiad of poets, of sages, of rhetors, of painters, and of jurisconsults which she had produced—Hipponax, Artemidorus, Parrhasius, Apelles, etc.—she well merited to be styled by Pliny the torch of Asia.[3]

Five hundred cities strewn along that favored coast shone around her, as Philostratus informs us. There were the Lydian cities of Sardis, of Thyatira, of Tralles, and of Magnesia, become entirely Grecian in language and in manners.[4] Higher up in Mysia, Cyzica attracted to her charming shore all the wealthy Romans eager for bright sunshine, for elegance, and for pleasure. There rose also Alexandria of Troas, whither Cæsar had but lately thought of transferring the seat of empire; Pergamos, formerly celebrated for her treasures of learning no less than for the proverbial opulence of her kings; below, in Caria, Alabanda, the home of actresses, of singing-girls, and of comedians, had sunk so low in voluptuousness that she was the first city which had consecrated a temple to the oppressive divinity of Rome.[5] Halicarnassus had risen from the ruin inflicted upon her by the anger of Alexander. Cnidus then displayed, under a lovely sky, those marble monuments whose remains yet excite the wonder of travellers. Finally, nearer Ephesus, and forming, as it were, her

[3] *Lumen Asiæ.*—Plin. *Hist. Natur.*, lib. v. 29, 31. See Diogen. Laert. *in Ephes.* Apud S. Chrysost., t. xi. p. 9, *Argum in Joan.:* "Plurimi ex philosophis qui in Asia floruerunt, illic erant; nam dicitur quidem et inde fuisse Pythagoras. Samos enim unde ortus erat, ionica est insula. Parmenidem quoque et Zenonem et Democritum, et multos nunc adhuc illic inveneris philosophos."

[4] Philostrat. *Vitæ Sophist.*, p. 56.

[5] Tacit. *Annal.*, bk. iv. cap. lvi.

satellites, radiated around her, in a circuit of not more than fifty to sixty miles, Prilæ, Miletus, Heraclea, Smyrna, Phocæa, Colophon, Clazomene, the island of Samos, all that heroic coast which the Greeks styled their *Pan Ionicon*, and which was immortalized in history and in poetry by Herodotus and by Homer.

Amongst all those cities Ephesus was the queen. From her hill of Prion, the fertility of which is praised by Pausanias, she shelved toward the borders of the Ægean Sea, following the refreshing shores of the Caÿster, the bed whereof widens near Ephesus and forms isles of verdure. Within the city enclosure the little lake of Pegasus, the windings of the Phryrites, and the fountain of Callipia, produced, even in the summer of that burning climate, an extremely agreeable temperature.[6] Philostratus also speaks of the Xystos, where they were accustomed to have chariot-races, and where the gladiatorial combats took place.[7] Finally, above the city the Cilbian hills inundated with light, below the two promontories of the Gulf of Colophon, the harbor crowded with sails, and the sea enamelled with islands, gave to that picture the only framing worthy of it—the boundless horizon of mountain, of sky, and of sea.

It was certainly none of those splendors which had attracted the Apostle St. John to Ephesus. Like Rome, like Athens, Alexandria, and Antioch, Ephesus, the great emporium of business and focus of doctrines ever incandescent, was furthermore a sink of religious superstition and of perversion; she was the bulwark of polytheism in Ionia.[8]

Greatly discredited in her mythology, paganism still

[6] Strabo, *Geography*, bk. xiv.
[7] Philostrat. *Vita Apollon. Thyan.*, t. i. lib. iv. cap. i.
[8] Benjamin Constant, *Roman Polytheism*, vol. i. ch. iv.

possessed two elements which, amid similar nations, were calculated to assure her a lengthened vitality: the beauty of her worship and her easy morality. The religion of Ephesus united both these seductions. Diana Artemis was one of the oldest Pelasgic divinities. She was the effeminate Astarte of the religions of Asia, which all, as we know, made nature their god and voluptuousness their worship. Styled in Thrace Artemis-Tauropola, Diana Limnatis along the marshes, Potamia or Alpheonia beside rivers, Acria or Coryphea upon the mountains, she everywhere received varied and sometimes sanguinary homage. But nowhere did she rule as in the temple whither flocked all Greece, drawn to Ephesus by the worship of the arts no less than by that of the gods.[9]

Pausanias declares that the Artemisian surpassed in splendor all the temples of other nations.[10] In the centre of the edifice, burned by Erostrates, and rebuilt shortly after in the most beautiful Ionic style, near the altars carved by Praxiteles and Thraso, above the statues of gods and of goddesses, which caused that sanctuary to resemble an Olympus, the great Ephesian Diana was represented by a large block of black wood coarsely carved, swaddled like an Egyptian mummy, and the body covered with beasts, disgusting type of her fecundity. The statue was said to be descended from heaven. Day and night her altar was surrounded by priests named *Megalobyses*, whilst youthful novices, styled *Melieres*, fed the fire whereon they unceasingly threw living animals.[11]

It was there, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that the entire Ionic confederation came to adore. "On

[9] Upon the Temple of Ephesus see Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist.*, bk xxxvi. ch. xiv., bk. xvi. ch. xl.

[10] Μέγεθος τοῦ ναοῦ τὰ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις κατασκευάσματα ὑπερηκότος. —Pausanias, p. 141.

[11] Döllinger, *Jew and Gentile*, London ed., vol. i. bk. ii.

certain days," says he, "men, women, and children gathered thither for religion and for business. There were horse-races and competitions of gymnastic exercises and of music, for which prizes were awarded to the victors. Cities, likewise, offered their rich gifts to the gods. Then, spectacles and business having terminated, festivals and public rejoicing at an end, if any city had a quarrel with another, the magistrates were there to judge the cause." [12]

What morals suited the religion of Artemis-Astarte? Pagan historians have furnished us with a picture of Ephesus which may give some idea of the horrors of which she had at that time become the theatre. "She was," relates Philostratus, "utterly buried in idleness and in arrogance. She abounded in fiddlers and similar players upon instruments, seekers after depravity and pleasure. The streets were crowded with effeminate, dissolute, and lascivious men, and the night resounded with serenades, alarms, and music." [13]

Finally, we may know what the great Artemis had made of those souls when we recall the saying of the Ephesians, driving from their city the sage Hermodorus: "We want no good men amongst us. If any such exist, let them go to dwell in other lands amid other nations."

Such was the city whither the virginal Apostle came to set up the altar of penance, of devotion, and of chastity.

Vainly should we now strive to find trace of the great

[12] "Templa construxere impensis communibus Diæræ Ephesiæ. Quo convenientes cum conjugibus et liberis, statis temporibus, una sacris dabant operam et mercimoniis. Ibi publico certamine cum equis pernicibus tum viris viribus arteve musica præcellentibus proponebantur præmia victoriæ, et diis civitates dicabant donaria. Peractis spectaculis ac negotiationibus, aliisque festis et publicis hilaritatibus, si cui civitati simultas intercedebat cum altera, præsto erant judices qui litem componerent."—Dionys., apud Baron. *Annal.*, t. i. p. 505.

[13] Philostrat. *Vit. Apollon. Thyan.*, trad par B. de Vigenère, t. i. bl, iv. ch. i. p. 718. Paris, in 4to, 1611.

metropolis of Ionia amid the swamps where once rose ancient Ephesus. Ephesus is a dead city. A blackish stream, called the Kara-sou, laves a miserable village styled Ayasalouk, inhabited by about fifty ragged Turkish families. Below, near the sea-shore, a large mass of ruins, bricks, broken columns, and crumbling walls, indicates the site of some ancient edifice. They are said to be the remains of the temple of the great Diana. In the centre of the village, upon a hill, stands an antique building of which the Mussulmans have made a mosque. That was formerly the Church of the Apostle St. John, and that is the sole souvenir left by the Angel of Ephesus to mark his passage.[14]

II.

When the Apostle approached, and, entering the harbor, which a large mole protected against the swelling tide, John for the first time gazed upon that city where the spirit of evil ruled sovereign master, must he not have felt within himself that stirring of spirit which Paul experienced upon arriving at Athens?

However, it is certain that Ephesus was no strange city to those of his nation. The Jews were established there in great numbers. They had there their worship, their collections, their synagogues, and, excepting Alexandria, there were few cities where they were to be found in such crowds. They did not dwell happily therein; for Josephus tells us that they were a prey to the peculations of Rome, fettered in their worship, ridiculed in their belief, despoiled of their wealth, subjected to hard labor, and overwhelmed with

[14] Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor*, i. 259. Thomas Smith, *Septem Ecclesiæ Apocalypsis.*

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

heavy taxes. When, half a century previously, the first Herod had passed through that city with his friend and patron, Agrippa, the minister of Augustus, such a cry of distress had issued from that oppressed multitude that the Roman prince found himself, as it were, forced to render them justice. A rhetor, the courtier and historian of Herod, Nicholas of Damascus, had pleaded their cause at length before him. Agrippa restored to them a portion of their rights at the prayer of Herod, whom he publicly embraced in token of friendship with the whole nation. But when he had departed, we may imagine the result of his promises and the fate of that race which already begun to bear the weight of the curse of God and of mankind.[15]

One consolation, at least, awaited the Apostle. The cross had already been planted in Ionia, and, stepping upon that pagan shore, he might hope to meet the disciples of Jesus.

The first who had taught them the name of Christ was possibly Peter himself during the journey he made into the Oriental countries after the First Council of Jerusalem.[16]

Another disciple of the Lord had come thither, with less doctrine and less authority, but with an eloquence and charm of language well calculated to please that nation of artists and of rhetors. He was named Apollo. He was an Alexandrian, "full of learning," say the Acts, "and mighty in the Scriptures."[17] Thanks to those happy gifts, that man was soon to gain to himself a considerable party at Corinth; and even amid the Greeks many ranked him

[15] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.*, lib. xviii. ii. 4. See the speech of Nicholas of Damascus and the whole scene, translated by M. de Saulcy, *Hist. of Herod*, pp. 248–255.

[16] Origen., ap. Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. i. 4. Hieronym., *De Vir. Illust.*, c. i. Epiphan. *Hæres.*, xxvii. 6. Assemani, *Biblioth. Orient.*, t. iii. c. ii. p. 3 et sq.

[17] Acts xviii. 24,

above St. Paul, who, nobly disdaining the ordinary methods of persuasion, professed to know nothing but Jesus crucified.

Ephesus was the field of his first success. Scripture does justice to the ardor of his zeal and to his impassioned language. However, that eloquent herald of the Gospel was not baptized. "He as yet knew only the baptism of John." Two Christians of Ephesus, come from Rome to Corinth, and from Corinth to that city, Aquila and Priscilla, simple mechanics, took him aside, relate the Acts, "and expounded to him the way of the Lord more diligently." [18] They then recommended him to the faithful of Achaia, whither he desired to go upon a like mission. Two trades-people acting as masters in the faith to a learned man who had by his eloquence excited the wonder of Greece, and the latter humbly becoming their disciple in a science which the schools had not taught him, was a novelty to which God was beginning to accustom the world.

Finally, St. Paul himself had come to Ephesus shortly after him, and his preaching had not been in vain. During nearly three years he had taught therein, enchaining by his word that multitude eager for the things of the mind, delivering the possessed and healing the sick, giving himself the example of manual labor—in short, urging the conquests of the faith to such an extent that the established worship was alarmed at the progress of a foreign religion, and after a riot, excited in the name of the great Diana of the Ephesians, the hunted Apostle had been forced to put to sea, taking with him some chosen disciples.[19] But others had remained, who welcomed the beloved disciple of the Lord with great joy; for he brought them the purest doctrine of the Master of truth and the treasure of his tenderest benedictions.

[18] Acts xviii. 25–28. [19] Acts xix.

There he likewise found Caius, lately the host of St. Paul, and to whom John was shortly after to address so beautiful an epistle;[20] Onesiphorus, that noble and generous Christian whose friendship "had refreshed the soul of St. Paul," and who later had not been ashamed of his chain";[21] Tychicus, styled by the Apostle "his dearest brother and faithful minister in the Lord."[22] There was also Trophimus, who from Asia, his native country, was one day to carry beyond the Alps the burning faith of Paul and the ardent charity of John.[23] Finally, in another rank of that society of brethren were those Christian spouses, Aquila and Priscilla, a poor household of mechanics, who from Corinth had come to settle at Ephesus, to hear, to assist, and to second St. Paul, working with him at tent-making, and whose humble fireside must have also been honored more than once by the presence of St. John.

But no one was happier in the arrival of the Apostle than he who was the head of that Christian community. He was a native Greek of Lycaonia, a frail man, yet in the flower of youth; of feeble health and of austere life, drinking only water, but of intrepid soul, who to save his people was to affront even martyrdom. Thus has St. Paul portrayed to us Timothy, his dearest disciple, whom he himself styled "the good soldier of Christ." Nourished in the Holy Scriptures by his pious mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, circumcised by St. Paul in the city of Lystra, then consecrated by the imposition of his hands, he had everywhere throughout Asia, Macedonia, at Athens, at Thessalonica, at Corinth, at Jerusalem, and at Rome, shared the heroic labors of his master when the latter, perceiving the great hopes for the faith in Ephesus, found

[20] Romans xvi. 23.
[21] 2 Tim. i. 16.
[22] Ephes. vi. 21.
[23] 2 Tim. iv. 20.

none more worthy to assume its government than that youthful missionary formed in his school.[24]

How greatly must St. John have loved that young priest, whose soul was so perfectly assimilated to his own! They dwelt together at Ephesus. It was no rare thing to see several bishops exercising at once the pontifical power in one same church at a time when that power was often conferred with the priesthood.[25] But an eminent and superior authority had devolved upon the Apostles, whose preaching and jurisdiction embraced an unlimited space. It is thus that from Ephesus, as from his metropolis, John is represented to us as urging his conquering course to the confines of Upper Asia. As to the distant missions of that Apostle amongst the Parthians, it is a suppositive fact which has no foundation save a faulty reading of his second epistle, as we shall see later.[26]

III.

John began by founding the churches of Asia; that was his principal work.[27]

After having been constrained to leave Ephesus, St. Paul had wished to see once again the priests of that Church; and having gathered them together near there,

[24] "I desired thee to remain at Ephesus."—1 Tim. i. 3. See Leo. Magn. *in Actis II. Concil. Chalced.*: Ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Τιμοθέου μεχρὶ τοῦ νῦν, ἑικοσι ἑπτα ἐπισκοποι ἐγένοντο. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, lib. iii. c. iv. p. 73. *Constitut. Apostolicæ*, apud Cotellier, t. i. See upon S. Timothy, *Dissert.* of Tillemont, t. ii.

[25] P. Petav. *Dissert. Eccl.*, lib. i. cap. i. et ii. Lib. i. *de Hierarchia Eccles.* Billuart, *in Summa S. Thomæ*, t. x.; *De Ordine*, *Dissert.* iv. art. 1. Perrone, *De Ordine*, cap. ii.

[26] See, contrary to Lenain de Tillemont, Lucke, *Commentary upon the Epistles of St. John*, p. 28.

[27] Totas Asiæ fundavit, rexitque Ecclesias.—S. Hieronym. *De Scriptor. Eccl.*, *in Joan.* Post ætatem senectam jubetur a Spiritu Sancto in Asiam prædicare et reflectere errantes in via.—S. Epiphan. *Hær.*, li.

at Miletus, he had recommended to them the universal flock whereof he had constituted them shepherds and bishops. He had commenced the work; St. John organized it. The militia was ready, the field of religious conquest lay open; St. John hastened to assign to each the post he was to take and to occupy in the name of Jesus Christ.

That fixed assignment of a bishop by the Church is an institution the honor of which has been too exclusively bestowed upon St. John. For that reason several Germans have styled it the Johannic system. Respectable as would be that origin, it dates back still further; and if John, more than any other, applies it to the churches of Asia in his Apocalypse, he nowhere assumes its invention. Already we have seen James the Less chosen to fill the See of Jerusalem. Paul himself, who, once called by the Lord, as St. Jerome expresses it, spreads himself over the face of the entire universe,[28] wishes, nevertheless, that Titus, his disciple, remain at Crete, and Timothy at Ephesus: *Rogavi te ut remaneres Ephesi.* "The Apostles," we read in the first epistle of St. Clement to Corinth—"the Apostles have given orders that, the bishops being dead, others should succeed them in their charge."[29] Thus we see founded the apostolicity of the infant Church, unanimously recognized, but nowhere more visible than in Asia, where St. John had just landed.

First, on the most elevated point of the sea-coast towards the north, Alexandria of Troas rises amid the ruins in the plain where once was Troy. St. John sent thither Carpus, the host of St. Paul.[30] A passage of the Second Epistle to Timothy represents him to us as already established there

[28] Qui vocatus a Domino effusus est super faciem universæ terræ.—S. Hieronym. *Oper.*, t. iii. p. 1412.)

[29] Clem. I. *Epist. ad Corinth.*, xliv.

[30] 2 Tim. iv. 13. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, t. i. p. 767.

before the death of the Apostle whom he had entertained during his journey.

Below was Pergamus, less wealthy than under the rule of the Attalidæ, but still justly proud of her library and of her learned schools, and overlooking from the heights of her conic mountain the winding course and fertile valley of the Caïcus. It is there, according to the Apostolic Constitutions, that John somewhat later established Gaius, that faithful, good man, to whom is addressed his third Epistle.[31]

Smyrna was not far distant. Destroyed by the Lydians, rebuilt by Antigonus and Lysimachus, she was a new city, constructed amphitheatrically upon the side of the mountain, extending towards the sea her beautiful, straight streets, her noble squares, and her marble temples, filled with glorious memories.[32] How was a city which held in honor the sanctuary and the mysteries of the Bona Dea, and which had raised a temple to Tiberius beside that of her poet Homer,[33] to exchange her manners and her poetry for the rigid creed and holy morality preached by barbarians? St. John sent thither one of his best disciples, called Aristo; but the Apostolic Constitutions merely mention him by name.[34]

Clement is better known. He it is whom St. Paul styles his coadjutor, who later became the companion of St. Peter, then one of his successors in the See of Rome. A questionable tradition places him first at Sardis, then scarcely risen from the ruins caused by an earthquake.[35]

[31] A Joanne Evangelista primus Pergami Episcopus creatus est Gaius.—*Constitut. Apostol.*, lib. vii. cap. xlvi.

[32] Strab., lib. xiv. p. 303.

[33] Tacit. *Annal.*, iv. 55, 56.

[34] *Constitut. Apostol.*, lib. vii. cap. xlvii.

[35] Strab., lib. xiii. p. 246. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, t. i. p. 860. We must own, however, that the abode of St. Clement at Sardis agrees but little with what is further known of his history. (S. Epiph. *Hæres.*, xxvii. vi. p. 107. S. Iren., lib. iii. cap. iii. p. 232.

To the east of Ephesus, further inland, and almost upon a line with Sardis, came first Philadelphia, likewise depopulated from the recent concussions of that unquiet soil; Laodicea, one of the largest cities of Phrygia;[36] and Colossus, which was destined several years later to yield to the violence of similar shocks.[37]

Colossus received as bishop, according to the testimony of St. Paul, his most beloved Epaphras, who was there, he says, the faithful minister of Jesus Christ.[38] As to Laodicea, it appears that Archippus had the principal care thereof.[39] He is mentioned by the Apostolic Constitutions before Epaphras and Nymphas, in whose house assembled that infant church.[40] Finally, nearer Ephesus, Tralles and Colophon, though less important, had nevertheless a share in the charity of St. John. It was through him that Colophon received the visit of Sosthenes, likewise one of the early companions of St. Paul.[41] After him Tychicus repaired to that city of ancient oracles, and brought it revelations far surer than those of her celebrated Apollo of Claros.[42]

The first bishop of Tralles is still more celebrated. If we may believe Basil Porphyrogenitus and the *Menologium*, it was the Apostle St. Philip who became her pastor previous to bearing the faith to the Indies. He died, as Eusebius tells us, at Hieropolis, near Laodicea, where we shall later find two of his daughters consecrating themselves to the service of Jesus Christ until their last hour, whilst their remaining sister, a virgin like themselves, will seek refuge near St. John, and will edify Ephesus by the miracle of a saintly life and of a holy death.[43]

[36] Strabo, lib. xiii. p. 253.
[37] Strabo, lib. xii.
[38] Coloss. i. 7.
[39] Ibid. iv. 17.
[40] Ibid. iv. 15.
[41] 1 Cor. i. V. item *Synaxis* and *Menolog. græc.*
[42] Tit. iii. 12. Cf. *Oriens Christianus*, t. i. p. 713.
[43] Εν Τραλλῃ τῆς Ἀσίας ἐπισκοπος γενόμενος ἐτελειώθη Φιλίππος.—*Ex Synaxario Basilii Porphyrog.* Eusebius, lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 191. Polycrat. *ad Victor pap.*, ibid.

We must undoubtedly avow that these are merely names. But what a new life reveals itself under those simple sounds! Details almost always escape us throughout this history, whose general plot alone is perceptible. But what moral revolution it argues; what youthful vigor in that generation, seemingly heaven-descended; what sudden novelty of courage, of doctrine, of language, and of morality! What heroes were those poor, simple, yet intrepid and convinced Christians; and how interesting it would be to follow the movements of their new-born recruits over that land of Asia which had so often been trampled under foot by armies of all ancient nations, but which had never seen such style of conquerors!

They were primarily but a society of tradesmen and plebeians, as St. Paul attests. The Apostles themselves labored with their hands for their livelihood. Paul affirms it of himself, and exhorts his brethren to the like. Ignatius the martyr prescribes it to priests. St. Clement does the same. Wherefore should the son of Zebedee, upon reaching Ephesus, have acted differently? Thus ennobling manual labor, these men prepared one of the greatest reforms operated by the Gospel. They raised it from the abjection to which it had been consigned by ancient society, which had made it the punishment of slaves and captives. By replacing it in honor and in veneration, these artisan Apostles prepared, by their example, the social revolution, the final results whereof are yet to be seen.

If, instead of performing great things and of dying for them, these priests had had time to relate them, we should see them at work. We should not find them seated under the shade of the Xysta or public porticoes; they had no benches at the circus, in the theatres, or in the other places of public amusement. Nor did they drag the chlamys of the patrician nor the mantle of the philosopher over the

marble steps of palaces or of temples. But we should see a man, clad in a simple tunic, descend towards the harbor, converse familiarly with the mariners upon their humble trade, which was likewise his own, speaking to them at first of the wind and the tempest, in order afterwards to name Him whom both winds and storms obey—in short, become once more with them a fisher of fish to be a fisher of souls; and that man is St. John. We should see him enter a small shop, wherein two spouses occupy themselves in praising Jesus Christ whilst manufacturing tents; it is the dwelling of SS. Aquila and Priscilla. We should also meet him, after the hours of labor, seated and arguing with a workman in bronze, whom pride leads astray into all the fantasies of free-thinking; he is that Alexander who had withstood the Apostle St. Paul. Sometimes we should hear him preach the Word of life, and testify to that which he had seen and handled with his hands, in the school of a neophyte who gave him an asylum; it was that of Tyrannus, that professor of Ephesus who had already sheltered St. Paul.[44]

We should find him more than once under the roof of a disciple whither crowded the poor and the strangers, who were succored with fraternal charity; it was the house of Gaius, whom John loved in the truth of Jesus.[45] Doubtless, also, we should behold him instructing, directing, and blessing the children of a noble Christian lady, unceasingly repeating to them the new commandment: "Love one another." Such was, in fact, his exhortation to the children of Electa, beloved by all disciples in the faith.[46] But most frequently it would be in the infectious dungeons of angry slaves that we should hear him preach the charity of Jesus, become a slave for us, or else bearing hope and grace to the dying pillow of children expiring under the

[44] Acts xix. 9. [45] 3 John i. 5. [46] 2 John 1.

eyes of their mothers. Such must have been the first apostolate of these men. "He who believes in me," said the Lord, "streams of life shall flow from his bosom." The divine life, formerly manifested in Jesus, began to issue in floods from the heart of St. John.[47]

Meanwhile, what thought the world? What it always thinks of God and of truth. They did not flock to the sermons of the Apostle, but they discussed, at Antioch, at Athens, at Alexandria, and at Ephesus, the libels then in fashion which a libertine of that day published upon *Chrestus*, as Jesus is styled in Suetonius and in Lucian. Pungent jests upon that adorable name seasoned obscene dialogues.

"Come, now," said to one of his comrades a student of Asia, who assumed therein the character of a disciple of St. Paul and of St. John—"come, now, I undertake to teach you the Universal and the name of Him who was before all things."

"But, my friend, since when have you become so learned?"

"Since the arrival of a certain Galilean—that man with a bald head and an aquiline nose, who raised himself in the air up to the third heaven, and who has drawn thence all that is noblest and best deserving of knowledge. He it is who, having regenerated me in water, has taught me to walk in the footsteps of the blessed—in short, who has re-

[47] This is the portrait left us of St. John at Ephesus by a Greek author of the ninth century, Nicetas David of Paphlagonia (*Orationes Encomiasticæ*, apud Biblioth. Patrum, t. xxvii. p. 393 et sq.): "Ephesum veniens non statim adventu suo civitatem turbavit. Non civium confestim animos magnifica Evangelii prædicatione perculit. Sed in sapientia cum externis ambulans, ac tempus, cum malum esset, redimens, benigniori indole modestoque gestu atque habitu et leni alloquio, cunctis ad se accessum facilem placidumque præbebat; vitæ vero disciplina, variaque et exculta virtute, inaccessus pariter et venerabilis erat."

deemed me from the midst of the impious. Come, if you will listen to me I will make a man of you." [48]

The other requires an oath.

"But by whom shall I swear?"

"By the God who reigns above—the great God, the God of the air, the Eternal, the Son of the Father, the Spirit which proceedeth from the Father, one in three, three in one. Behold the true Jupiter; behold the God in whom one must believe."

"But it is a lesson in ciphering which you are giving me, and that oath is arithmetic: one makes three, three make one. I do not comprehend you." [49]

It continues in like manner. They explain creation and redemption, the laws of charity and the rules of justice. There is, however, nothing very witty in it all. But the interlocutor, who styles himself Critias, declares that there must be an end to all these pleasantries; for "he is nearly splitting with laughter." Did not St. Paul say that the new wisdom was to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness?

[48] Lucian. *Philop.*, edit. Bourdelot, in fol., p. 1121; Paris, 1615. Theodore Marcille, in his notes upon that dialogue, judges the dialogue itself to be prior to Lucian: "Non est hujusce Luciani, sed *antiquioris* alicujus. Multa id arguunt. Nam Syrus noster Lucianus pervexit ad annum Christi 171. At hic nebulo se baptizatum significat a D. Paulo, qui martyrii palmam accepit anno XIII. Neronis.

"Ἠνίκα δέ μοι Γαλιλαῖος ἐνέτυχεν, ἀναφαλαντίας, ἐπιῤῥινος, εἰς τρίτον οὐρανον ἀεροβατήσας, καὶ τὰ κάλλιστα ἐκμεμαθηκὼς διʼὕδατος ἡμᾶς ἀνεκαίνισεν, ἐς τὰ τὰ τῶν μακάρων ἴχνια παρεισώδουσε, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἀσεβῶν χώρων ἡμᾶς ἐλυτρώσατο."

[49] "Quemnam igitur tibi jurabo?—Jura Deum alte regnantem, magnum, æthereum atque æternum, Filium Patris, Spiritum ex Patre procedentem, unum ex tribus, et ex uno tria. Hæc tu Jovem puta, hunc existima Deum.—Numerare me doces, et jusjurandum arithmetica tibi est. Neque enim intelligo quid dicas: unum tria, tria unum."—*Ibid.*, p. 1121.

IV.

Meanwhile they did not always laugh at Ephesus. More than any other that place then needed the fostering care of the Apostle by reason of the calamities which burst from all sides upon that city of sorrows, no less than of pleasure. Those are the chosen hours of charity. Ephesus was occasionally aroused from her feasting by earthquakes, which overthrew her houses, her theatres, and her temples. Here history absolutely agrees with the legend of St. John, and lends it singular authority. Strabo traces for us the long circuit of the maritime cities of Ionia swallowed up at that time.[50] Tacitus likewise relates that shortly before, when Germanicus visited that country, he found it utterly ruined by the frightful swelling of the coast, all strewn with rubbish.[51] Amongst those cities Ephesus is named the first, and I find the remembrance of those public disasters in the account which Prochorus gives of the miracles of St. John.

"In those days happened a great earthquake," he writes, "wherein eight hundred persons perished. Those who remained prostrated themselves before the Apostle, saying to him: 'O master! we beseech you restore these dead bodies to life, and we will then believe in that God whom you preach.'

"John answered them: 'Ephesians, hearts slow to believe in the only true God, even should these unfortunate ones rise to life before your eyes, you will remain obstinate in your incredulity.'

"But they ceased not to implore; and, prostrating themselves upon the ground, they besought him for their dead ones.

"John was moved by their tears. For some time he

[50] Strabo, lib. xiv. et xiii., edit. in 4to, p. 240 et sq. [51] Tacit., *Annal.*

silently raised his eyes towards heaven, sighing and weeping. 'Lord Jesus Christ,' said he, 'who art eternally true God with the Father, who didst descend from heaven to save mankind, hear the prayers of thy servant who cries to thee. Pardon this people their sins, and grant that those who lie there may rise from the dead, that they may know that thou art the true God, and may believe in thee, who hast sent me.'

"After these words of John, the servant of God, the earthquake ceased. The men who were buried under the ruins rose and prostrated themselves at his feet. Then John began to catechise them concerning the one and same divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are three persons in one same substance; and he taught them to adore it." [52]

The legend mentions a large number of Ephesians whom John restored to life. Once it is a youth named Stacteus, son of a Roman called Zoticus, and of an illustrious pagan, Symphorosa, who were both converted when the Apostle restored their child to life. Another time it is the son of the priest of the goddess, dead in a bath, whom they lay at the feet of John, who restores him to life in presence of Dioscoris, his father. Eusebius, Sozomen, and before them Apollonius the Theologian, relate the miracle of a dead man raised to life at the prayer of the Apostle.[53] Prochorus cites several cases. Undoubtedly, each of these recitals would require a severe and circumstantial criticism to be considered as authoritative. But can we not at least find therein the echo of the great celebrity accompanying the miracles of St. John?

[52] Prochor., *Vita S. Joan.*, in Magna Biblioth. Patrum, t. vii. cap. iv. This latter phrase upon the three divine hypostases, as found in the original text, seem sufficiently to indicate that that history was written during the preoccupation of Arianism and against it, during the time following the Council of Nicea.

[53] See Euseb., lib. v. cap. xvii., in fine. Sozomen., lib. vii. cap. xxvi.

God was with him. But, by his whole soul as well as by all his works, the beloved Apostle was with God. The most ancient monument ever raised in Ephesus by Christianity was a sanctuary of Mary, which, being transformed, later became the metropolitan church of that city. It is said to have been dedicated to Mary by St. John. There it was that, four centuries later, assembled the general council against Nestorius, wherein Cyril promulgated with as much eloquence as solemnity the dogma of the divine maternity of the Virgin. But it was there previously that John had prayed, and that he was accustomed to regenerate souls in the breaking of bread.

More than two hundred years after it was still held in remembrance. In a letter addressed to Pope St. Victor, Polycrates, one of the bishops of that Church, recalled the frontlet of gold which John wore upon his forehead during the holy mysteries, after the example of the pontiffs of the old law.[54] Primitively, doubtless, his church was but a humble oratory, or probably even the house of one of the brethren, hidden from profane eyes by its obscurity, and lost amid the crowd of wonders of art. But an altar to Mary beside the shrines of the great Artemis; St. John kneeling before it to beg the aid of her whom he had himself sheltered upon earth, and whom God had given him as mother from the cross; Greeks and Ephesians gathered together under the auspices of that immaculate Jewess to learn lessons of virginity and to listen to the accounts of the life of the Man-God from the lips of him who had been his disciple and his friend, was assuredly one of the most admirable representations of the revolution which Christianity wrought within souls.

[54] "Joannes qui in sinu Domini recubuit, qui etiam sacerdos fuit et lamìnam gestavit."—Polycrat., *in Epist. ad Victorem pap.* See Euseb., lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 131: Ἰωάννης ἐγενήθη ἱερεὺς τὸ πέταλον πεφορεκὼς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ κεκαλμηται.

Thus God performed his work. Whilst at Cyprus, at Rhodes, at Cos, at Miletus, at Pergamus—everywhere throughout that land—the gay world flocked to its temples, its circuses, its sunny villas, its elegant festivals, and its infamies, delighting themselves with the corrupt inspirations of Ovid, with the cynicism of Petronius, with the lessons of Catullus, a pure generation, hidden among the people, rose and flourished at the foot of a humble altar sculptured neither by Praxiteles or Thraso. John did not hand them the cup which inebriated the disciples of Socrates in the symposia[55] described by Plato; but he gave them to drink of the chalice which he had received from the hand of Jesus at the farewell supper; and that youth arose from that new table strengthened against voluptuousness, ripe for the priesthood, armed for martyrdom. By it the world began to show forth a purity which was applauded of God; and it was for that victory which St. John praised them when he says: "I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one." [56]

[55] *Symposium*—from the Greek—a merry drinking-feast

[56] 1 John ii. 14.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF EPHESUS, ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN AND ST. PAUL.

I.

IT was during the interval of these events, towards the year 62, according to the best calculation, that Ephesus received the letter addressed by St. Paul to the Christians of that city. That epistle, with two others written about the same time to his disciple Timothy, who was its bishop, contain a portion of the religious history of that growing Church. The Epistles, the Apocalypse, and the Gospel of St. John complete the picture. Together they present to us the image of the grain of mustard-seed becoming a large tree and flourishing with ever-renewed vigor, whilst the Roman Empire, like a crumbling edifice, gradually sank under the weight of its grandeur.[1]

The letter to the Ephesians was written from Rome. After having electrified with his fervid eloquence almost all the provinces of the East and of the West, Paul had attacked the capital of the empire and of idolatry. But if he had charmed Seneca by his doctrine,[2] his austere morality had displeased Nero, and the Apostle was de-

[1] That parallel movement of the growth of the Church and of the decay of the Empire is well demonstrated in the work of A. de Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain au IVme Siècle*. It is the purport of the book, as is laid down in the Preface.

[2] See the work of M. Fleury upon Seneca and St. Paul.

tained captive two years in the city of the Cæsars. In the depths of his prison, which is still visited in the substructions of the Church of Santa Maria in Via Lata, at the foot of the Capitol, these words are graven upon the column to which it is said St. Paul was fastened: *Sed verbum Dei non est alligatum*—"But the word of God is not bound." In fact, his thoughts went forth to the sons whom he had begotten beyond the seas, and the Ephesians rejoiced to catch the echo of that voice from prison, which was his adieu no less than his remembrance.

He who bore it was that Tychicus whom we have already named. He was to distribute copies of it to all the churches lying along his passage; and it appears, in fact, that that circular-letter was addressed to all the provinces of that sea-coast. Even in the time of St. Basil it was sometimes styled the Epistle to the Laodiceans, because a copy bore that superscription.[3] But it was Ephesus specially that the Apostle had in view, as the metropolis whence the torch of the Gospel shone upon Ionic Asia.

It began thus:

"Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to all the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ. . . .

"Wherefore I also hearing of your faith that is in the Lord Jesus, and of your love towards all the saints,

[3] Marcio *in Apostolicon*, apud Tertullian, *Contra Marcionem*, vii. See Valroger, *Introduct. to the Books of the New Testa.*, t. ii. p. 271.

"Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you always in my prayers." [4]

What was this progress of the faith in Ephesus? What charity there displayed her works? Which saints were the objects of that religious love? Had Paul learned in his captivity the favor which God had just shown to his Church of Ephesus in sending her the disciple whom Jesus loved?

I could not say; and such was not, furthermore, the principal object of the apostolic letter. It was the vocation of the pagans to the faith, the universal redemption of mankind by the blood of Jesus Christ, the approaching universality of his conquest, which occupied the mind of the great Apostle; and the doctrine of Paul, upon that point as upon all others, was in perfect accordance with that of St. John.

St. John said that "God hath first loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins"; [5] and St. Paul wrote in like manner "that God chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in his sight in charity." [6]

St. John styled Jesus "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world"; and St. Paul names him the "victim of propitiation, not only for our sins, but for those of the whole world." [7]

St. John said that "all who receive Jesus and who believe in his name, receive power to become the sons of God." [8] So did St. Paul write to the Ephesians: "The divine predestination hath called us to the honor of the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the purpose of his will. Therefore there are no more Jews nor Gentiles, but all are fellow-citizens with

[4] Ephesians i. 1 et seq.
[5] 1 John iv. 10.
[6] Ephes. i. 4.
[7] Rom. iii. 25.
[8] John i. 12.

the saints, and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."[9]

Such was the revolution which Paul and John united in bringing to Ephesus as to the queen church, under whose sceptre the young Christian communities came daily to range themselves. Thus all the former pretensions of Asia to coalesce in the unity of one same rule and of one civilization embracing the world were strangely reproduced; and a tent-maker, from the depths of a prison, resumed, in the name of a crucified Jew, that programme the weight whereof had formerly crushed the power of Alexander.[10]

And that eloquence was by no means sterile. The letter to the Ephesians was at the same time a constitution which established *orders* in the religious community, according to the profound name which the Church has bestowed upon the divine consecration of her ministers. St. John did the like. Those writers are deceived who have chosen to see in the ecclesiastical hierarchy but a usurpation or an institution posterior to the Apostles. It is the divine privilege of the history of the Church never to have experienced, like all human works, a first period of outline, as it were, and of formation. It sprang forth perfected from the thought of God, as did the creation in the beginning of the world; and thus we may see rise, from its origin, in its sublime and unchangeable architecture, the edifice whereof Jesus is the corner-stone, uniting the two long-divided walls of ancient Judaism and of Gentilism.[11]

At the summit of the hierarchy we have already saluted the bishops. The episcopate received from the constitution of St. Paul and of St. John the code of her laws and the

[9] Ephes. i. 5, ii. 19, 20. [10] Plutarch, *in Alexandri Vita.*
[11] Ephesians ii. 14, 29.

rules of her duties. It was not merely "a temporary state, a provisory lieutenancy, destined to provide for the urgent necessities of the new missions"; [12] it was the foundation of a permanent power which God "had placed to rule his Church." [13] It was not only the mission of the Apostle or of the Evangelist who teaches and who passes; it was the establishment of the father of a family amidst his children. Still less was it "a simple pre-eminence, a mere honorary presidency, in the assemblies of the saints." [14] It is to teach, to govern, to rebuke, to impose hands, to oversee, and to inspect, that Timothy is sent to Ephesus. The episcopate appears not only as a dignity, but likewise as an authoritative power; it is the paternal magistracy of souls, and, as its name indicates, the very eye of God and of his providence over the Church, whereof the bishop is henceforth the spouse.

At the same time with his rights the letters addressed to the Bishop of Ephesus laid down strictly the text of his duties. "The bishop," wrote St. Paul to the pontiff of that city, "must be without crime, blameless, sober, prudent, of good behavior, chaste, given to hospitality, a teacher, not given to wine, no striker, but modest, not quarrelsome, not covetous, but one that ruleth well his own house, that he may be, by his example, the light of all his people." [15]

Learning, purity, and charity—St. John resumed in one word that moral excellence of the new pontificate. In the language of Paul, which is that of law, the bishop is the pastor—that is to say, the overseer, the inspector—of the

[12] See Neander, *The Apostolic Ages*, 2 vols.; M. de Pressensé, *Hist. of the First three Centuries of Christianity*, t. i. p. 375, et passim.

[13] Acts xx. 28.

[14] M. de Pressensé, *Hist.*, etc., refuted by A. de Broglie, *On Protestant Criticism*, *Correspondant* of Sept. 25, 1859.

[15] 1 Tim. iii. 2.

Church. In St. John, more mystical, the bishop of the Church is the angel: *Angelo Ephesi Ecclesiæ scribe.* It is from a human point of view that Paul regards it; John considers it specially from that of God. Paul locates it upon earth; John views it in heaven, whither later, in fact, it was shown to him before the throne of the Lamb, in the image of one clothed in the vestments of purity, wearing the diadem, and bearing the golden urn filled with the prayers of the saints—a holy, innocent, pure, and spotless man, higher than the heavens, as the Apostle exclaims; similar, in fact, to the picture we form to ourselves of the angels, having merely the superior part of our nature—the head to understand God, the heart to love him—with two swift wings to scorn earth and to soar to the highest heavens.

Below the bishops, and yet beside them, Ephesus had her priests, forming her presbytery, as St. Paul styles her college of ministers. Like the bishop, but after him, they imposed hands for the august consecration of the priesthood; and that was such a grace that Paul earnestly recommended Timothy to meditate constantly upon it.[16] Like the bishop, they presided over the assemblies of the Christians, and, by reason of that dignity, the Apostle deems them worthy of double honor.[17] Like the bishop, they preached, and their authority was surrounded by a superhuman prestige which prohibited the reception, without solid proofs, of any accusation against those interpreters of the Word of God.[18]

Their name even, in its double signification, called forth the idea of gentle gravity and of religious honor. They were the senate, *seniores*, the Conscript Fathers, of the Church; and John gives himself no other title in the open-

[16] 1 Tim. iv. 15. [17] 1 Tim. v. 17. [18] 1 Tim. v. 19.

ing of his last two canonical Epistles. They were the "elders" likewise—*presbyteri*—as St. Paul styled them, thereby confounding by a noble synonym the majesty of the priesthood with that of gray hairs.[19]

Those ancients or elders, those priests, are afterwards met by St. John within that glorious city;[20] and, having just pictured them at the head of their earthly churches, in their mortal condition, he forthwith portrays them in heaven, holding golden harps and swinging censers before the altar of "Him who is the Ancient of days, God living for ever."

And yet that form of Christian priesthood had had no precedent in history. It was an inspired form, truly sent from heaven, and without analogy throughout antiquity. There had, indeed, existed a Jewish pontificate, but whose dignities were sold at auction, and whose competitors slaughtered one another at the gate of the Temple. There was likewise the pagan pontificate; but the pontifex maximus of the day was named Nero; he slew his mother, poisoned his brother, clothed himself as a comedian, and led chariot-races in the great amphitheatre. Near, in Ionia, in a lower rank, the priests of Cybele with their savage songs and their Bacchanalian dances, the magi of Persia with their hideous masks, the ministers to Mithra, to Eros, to Aphrodite, intoxicating themselves with the sacred beverage of the Homa during the sacrifice, excited the ridicule of the most credulous, whilst the wisest asked themselves if such worship rendered to the Divinity were not a blasphemy rather than a sacrifice.[21]

[19] "That name came undoubtedly from the ancient synagogue, which had likewise its *Takanim*, or elders."—Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vetere*, iii. c. i. p. 616.

[20] "Four-and-twenty ancients were sitting."—Apoc. iv. 4.

[21] See Döllinger, *Jew and Gentile*, London ed.; Ibid., vol. ii. bk. vi. ch. i., *Asia Minor*.

It is from the bosom of these horrors that issued a priesthood whose sign was a cross, but so utterly superior to all earthly ideas that God alone could serve as its model; and a disciple of St. John, Ignatius the martyr, might well write to one of the churches of Asia: "Attach yourselves to the bishop as Christ to his Father. Honor God first as the sovereign Master, but, after him, the bishop as the prince of priests and the image of God, of the Father by authority, of Christ through the priesthood. Let my part be with those who think in this manner." [22]

Next came the deacons, who occupied a distinguished place in the Church of Ephesus. "My heart is with those who are submissive to the bishop, to the priests, and to the deacons," said Ignatius in the same letter. In our own day, the diaconate being but a rest upon the threshold of the priesthood, we can form little idea of that order in the primitive Church, whereof Ephesus is the type. The deacons instituted in the Church of Ephesus were to be the model and the example of the flock. "The deacons," wrote St. Paul to the bishop of that city, "should in like manner be chaste, upright, sober, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience." [23]

They bore within them the mystery of truth as well as of charity. It was, as the name indicates, an auxiliary *service* to that of the priesthood, created at Jerusalem by the necessity of aiding and of replacing the Apostles in the administration of temporal affairs, often hardly compatible with the sacred recollection of prayer. "The deacon is to the bishop what Jesus Christ is to his Father," say the Apostolic Constitutions. "He is his eye, his arm, his ear, his heart, and his soul." [24] He baptized the pagans, cate-

[22] S. Ignatius *ad Smyrn.*

[23] 1 Tim. iii. 8.

[24] *Constitut. Apost.*, lib. ii. cap. xliv.; apud Thomassin, *Discipline of the Church*, vol. i. ch. xxix.

chised the children, instructed the ignorant, dismissed the uninitiated from the mysteries reserved only to the faithful, distributed the Eucharist, carried it to the sick, kept up constant communication amongst the distant churches by bearing messages and eulogies to scattered bishops, and in evil days even descended into dungeons to convey to dying martyrs the Scriptures and the consolations of God.[25]

Ephesus was not slow to behold that spectacle. Only ten years after the death of John, St. Ignatius, enchained for the name of Jesus, passing by that church on his way to Rome, had the consolation to enjoy the pious and loving charity of the deacons of that city. Four among them have merited the mention of history; they were named Fronte, Burrhus, Euplos, and Crocos. They prostrated themselves before the soldier of Jesus Christ; they kissed his chains; they prepared the agapes and provided for his journey. Ignatius praised them in his letter addressed to the faithful of Smyrna, and thanked them for having consoled his poverty and honored by their pious hospitality the Church of St. John.[26]

II.

The widows rank next to the deacons in the constitution of the Church of Ephesus. It was even with the view of taking care of widows that the diaconate had been instituted in the Church of the Cenacle. When we recall the state in which woman was then held, the facility accorded her by divorce, the levity wherewith she continually contracted fresh nuptials, enumerating her husbands by each

[25] "Semper factum est ut diaconi ad carceres commeantes martyrum desideria consiliis suis et Scripturarum præceptis gubernarent."—S Cyprian.

[26] St. Ignatius *ad Smyrn.*, p. 2, edit. Cotellier, London, 1644.

consulate,[27] as an ancient author expresses it, we may realize the great and difficult service that the Church was about to render to regenerated society by honoring widowhood almost equally with virginity itself. It was, furthermore, the tendency of that gentle religion to address herself to the afflicted; and there were none more broken-hearted. These women, left alone, bereft of all, as their new, sad name implied, without love or support, were met upon the threshold of despair by religion, which opened their souls to a fresh divine alliance which would know neither separation nor death.

St. Paul recommended the younger ones to remarry, through condescension, remarks St. Jerome, and to prevent their going astray in times when widowhood but signified the right to the public disorder of free-living.[28] Others, more established in the grace of God, he advised to remodel themselves in a second integrity by withdrawing from the world.[29] Widowhood became a state of continency, and fragrant virtues flourished in that field of Asia planted by St. Paul and cultivated by St. John. The legendary life of St. John cites several holy widows amongst the early disciples of the Apostle of Ionia. But, within the bounds of history, was it not to Electa, a Christian widow, generous and charitable among all others, that St. John addressed his Second Epistle? Isolated or assembled in the *matronæum*, as the Latins styled the gynœceum, the widows of the Church prayed, worked, sang psalms, frequented the altars, performed good works, and read holy books, contented with their poverty, grateful for the alms

[27] Seneca, De Benef., iii. 16. See upon that subject the work of Laboulaye, *Researches into the Condition of Woman*, bk. i. sects. i. and ii.

[28] 1 Tim. v. 14. S. Hieronym. *ad Salvinam, de Viduitate Servanda;* S. Ambrose *de Viduis;* S. Aug. *de Bono Viduitatis*, apud Thomassin, t. iii. ch. l. p. 170 et sq.

[29] 1 Tim. v. 2–10.

of their brethren, and ever raising their hearts towards God in thanksgiving. "See those saintly widows," said a deacon martyr, "who, once deprived of their husbands, have sought no second love. They are the rich necklace of the Church; these are the pearls wherewith she adorns herself. They are the dowry which pleases Christ, her Spouse, and the precious crown which decorates her brow." [30]

When the widows had attained the age of sixty, and, after the loss of the first husband, had never engaged in second nuptials, had properly educated their children, and had given proofs of wisdom and of maturity, the Church made choice of them for a service analogous to that of the deacons. They then took the title of deaconesses or of deconines. Deaconesses appear for the first time in the Church of Ephesus, with these conditions: "Let the widow," wrote St. Paul, "be chosen of no less than threescore years of age, who hath been the wife of one husband, having testimony for her good works, if she have brought up children, if she have received to harbor, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have ministered to them that suffer tribulation, if she have diligently followed every good work." [31]

Then the widow *sat*, as we read in ancient inscriptions: *Vidua sedit.* By that consecration somewhat of the sacerdotal aureola marked her brow, whilst her soul was held likewise to bear its virtues. Thus St. Epiphanius gives them the name of priestesses; were they not, in fact, dedicated to that which the priesthood holds dearest—the ministry of the poor and that of the altar?

From Ephesus, where it had just received its organization, the order of deaconesses quickly spread throughout

[30] Prudent. *in Martyr. S. Lamentii*, apud Thomassin, *Des Congreg.*, ch. l.

[31] 1 Tim. v. 9.

the East. Paul has already mentioned, in the Epistle to the Romans, the holy woman Phebe, who was deaconess in a suburb of Corinth.[32] Shortly after we hear of two deaconesses whom Pliny puts to the torture to learn the truth concerning Christianity. He himself gives them that name which the pagans well knew, and we marvel to meet it from such a pen.[33]

At Antioch St. Ignatius will meet the deaconesses as guardians of the holy gates. We find them at Rome in the person of that Grapta who is mentioned by St. Clement and by Hermas.[34] They are a legacy which the Church of the Cenacle will transmit to that of the Catacombs; and we shall soon behold those saintly women, widows of martyrs fallen in the persecutions, serving the altars raised over the tombs of their valiant spouses.

Ephesus likewise witnessed the virtues of the choir of virgins who had put into practice the recommendations of St. Paul and of St. John. It is true that St. Paul had not pretended to make a command of that angelical state, which can be but an exception and a perfection. "Concerning virgins," said he, "I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give counsel;"[35] and he followed it; he set an example, desirous that his brethren should walk in his footsteps. "I would that all men were even as myself," wrote the great Apostle. That had sufficed; all ranks, all sexes, had understood that wish. Timothy was a virgin. Then, near him, Ionia had been perfumed by that youthful Thecla, the first female martyr, who, having one day heard

[32] Romans xvi. 1.

[33] Necessarium credidi ex duabus ancillis quæ *ministræ* dicebantur, quid esset veri per tormenta quærere.—Plin., lib. x. p. 96.

[34] And Origen (*Periarch.*, lib. iv. cap. ii) considers her as one of the widows charged to instruct the poor and to aid the sick and orphans.

[35] 1 Cor. vii. 25.

the great Paul proclaim the honor of virginity, had, in order to observe it, severed the dearest ties, quitted her father's house, and braved the teeth of lions and the flames of the stake, choosing to have no other friend nor spouse save God!

But to John, the disciple of the Lamb, was specially reserved the office of ardent propagator and perfect model of virginity throughout that land of Asia. May we credit, according to SS. Modestus, Photius, and Gregory of Tours, that Mary Magdalen had followed the Apostle to Ephesus to form to the service of God young Christian maidens, whose innocence she envied?[36] The contrary tradition has prevailed amongst us. But we shall soon behold the daughters of St. Philip receive from the hands of St. John the virginal veil, which they were to honor by so many striking miracles and eminent virtues. "The second Epistle of John is addressed to virgins," declares Clement of Alexandria.[37] "I salute the college of virgins," St. Ignatius was shortly to write to the churches of Asia; and ancient society, sunk in sensualism, everywhere found herself confronted by the spectacle of angelic purity in mortal flesh.[38]

"To prefer purity to conjugal happiness," later wrote Tertullian, "to be beautiful only for God, to be young only for God, to live continually with him, to converse with him night and day, to bring him as a dowry the treasures of her prayers, is not to contract a terrestrial

[36] S. Modest. *in Bibliotheca Photii*, cap. cclxxv. p. 1525. S. Gregor. Turon., cap. xxx. p. 64. *Menolog. græc.*, ad xxii. julii, p. 222. That opinion is overthrown in the work of the Abbé Faillon.

[37] Secunda Joannis epistola quæ ad *virgines* scripta est. Clement. Alex. *Adumbrat in II. Joan.*, t. ii. p. 1011.

[38] Upon the vow of continence and of chastity, styled by them εὐνουχία, see Athenagor. *Legatio.*, xxxiii.; Clem. Alexandri, *Strom.*, iii. 12; Tatian, xxxiii.; Theophyl. *ad Autolyc.*, iii. 13; Origen, *C. Cels.* vii. 48.

marriage; it is to enter at once into the family of the angels." [39]

Even terrestrial marriage owes its integrity to the eminent example of virginity. As has been remarked, "conjugal holiness could not exist amongst a nation, in a society, in a church, but under condition of being encouraged, supported, and, so to say, commanded by a still higher sanctity. To make war upon vice demands the height of virtue; to purify marriage requires the example of perfect continence; the virgin must be the guardian of the wife. And for that reason the virgin is everywhere to be met with in Catholicism." [40]

All that was the wonder of the Greeks. "We have indeed seen amongst them," said St. Chrysostom, "a small number of philosophers succeed in despising wealth or in overcoming anger. But never and nowhere has the flower of chastity blossomed amid those sages. It is a prerogative whereof they yield us the honor, considering it as a thing above nature and which is not of man. That it is which procures us the admiration of the world." [41]

But in no place was that spectacle more surprising than in the city of Ephesus and during the time of St. John—a remarkable coincidence, which clearly explains the miracle of that work of God. It is at the moment wherein St. Paul traced that ideal portrait of the faithful widow, and in that very city, the city of St. John, that was placed the scene of a licentious tale, wherein the pagan widow shows herself such as she was, as if for an eloquent and afflicting contrast. A libertine of Rome, named Petronius, had portrayed her after his own fashion in a shameless work,

[39] Tertull. *ad Uxor.*, lib. i.

[40] De Champagny, *The Antonines*, vol. i. p. 192.

[41] S. Joan. Chrysost. apud Thomassin, *De Virginibus*, t. iii. ch. xlii. p. 179.

and his *Matron of Ephesus* furnished the table-jests of young patricians during their drinking-feasts at the proconsular palace. That tale suited the tastes of the time. Virtue had therein pleasant weaknesses, fidelity presented a ridiculous figure, and even the religion of the tombs was profaned, together with that of remembrance, in order to give crime the savor of sacrilege. That was styled Atticism by the courtiers, and moralists considered it the true picture of female virtue. Petronius was consul; St. Paul was in chains. Tacitus consecrates pages to the praise of Petronius; he mentions the Christians, the brethren of St. Paul, but to devote them to general execration. Between the prison where St. Paul wrote his holy laws and the Golden House, where the favorite of Nero dictated the turpitudes of his *Matron of Ephesus*, there was the distance of two Roman miles; but between the widow of the epistles and the widow of the *Satyricon* there was the space which separates a world regenerating in more than human honor and a universe dying in degradation, in rottenness, and in shame.

III.

Yet, whilst Tacitus and other authors mourned over the approaching decline and fall of the empire as prognosticated by the signs of the times, we read in St. John: "I write to you these things, that you may know that you have eternal *life*, you who believe in the name of the Son of God." The same voice repeated in expiring Asia: "He that hath the Son hath life. And this is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal *life*. And this life is in his Son."

Those, therefore, who wished to lead that moral life came to the Son of God.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

Firstly, there were oppressed souls; and when the wretchedness of the times, the tyranny of the emperors, the brutal and unrestrained licentiousness of the soldiery, the exactions of the pretors, the devastations of barbarians and the anarchy of provinces, conspired to overthrow all order, unnumbered crowds lent ear to the gentle voice which preached liberty, fraternity of souls, and eternal justice.

There were great souls, impatient of earth, suffering from their imperfect happiness still more than from their woes, craving for the infinite frequently without being conscious of it, and who understood St. John when he spoke of that water which alone can quench the burning thirst of the heart for eternal life.

There were specially a great number of simple souls, in whom honesty had not utterly perished, and who recognized the true God in the unceasing miracle of the life of the Christians and of their charity. "The world," says Bossuet, "saw the saints and believed in holiness."

"Eternal justice," formerly announced by the prophet Daniel, then inaugurated her reign under that name of *sanctity*. The Church of Ephesus had just received the code thereof in the instructions of St. Paul and of St. John.

That life of holiness was the life of God himself, infused by grace, reproduced in action. "My little children," said St. John to the Ephesians, "to be of God and in God, is to walk even as he walked." "Be ye imitators of God, as his dear children," wrote St. Paul to the same people. To reproduce within one's self the features of that holy Model; to have the sentiments which Jesus Christ had; to participate in his humility, in his renunciation; to put on his bowels of compassion—such is the vocation of the true disciple. Jesus, who is the type of perfection, will equally be its aliment and its source; for the law of the Saviour

bestows all that it commands, according to the noble expression of St. Augustine.

Thus, whilst everywhere, in Rome and throughout the empire, the writers of that age could not sufficiently evince their contempt for those "little Greeks," as the scoffers styled them, behold, in the very centre and in one of the capitals of that voluptuous Asia, religion had that confidence in her own grace, and that respect for them, as to summon them to a species of moral apotheosis by initiating them into the virtues of God. They were an idle people; labor was made honorable amongst them.[42] They were a lying and deceiving nation; the neophytes of Ephesus eschewed all falsehood.[43] They were a city of comedians, artists, and actors; and, behold, impurity finds not even a name amid those holy men, *sicut decet sanctos*, by whom all stain is reputed as slavery and idolatry.[44]

Order was re-established in the domestic and social chaos of a deranged world. Marriage, so dishonored in the dissolution of the Roman family, so degraded amongst the Jews by the new and peculiarly convenient doctrines of Hillel and of his school, was raised to the dignity of a great sacrament, symbol of the alliance of Jesus Christ and of his Church—that is to say, of devotion and of immolation for life and until death.[45]

The implacable severity of the father of the family and his right of life and of death over his children were tempered by the duty of Christian tenderness. The rude Roman had just read in the letter to the Ephesians that he is bound to respect the frail being who depends wholly upon him. The child, on his side, learned for the first time that he should see God in those decrepit parents whom the

[42] Ephes. iv. 28.
[43] Ephes. iv. 25.
[44] Ephes. v. 3.
[45] Ephes. v. 22, 23.

comic poets of the time so ridiculed.[46] Finally, the sweet, gentle portrait of the Christian mother rises beside that of the father; the family is seated upon its divine basis. Commenting on the saying of the Lord in St. Matthew, "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Clement of Alexandria asks himself: "By these three does not the Gospel designate the husband, the wife, and the child?"[47] Domestic society has no nobler image of her consecration.

As to the system of slavery, religion would not, neither could she, abolish it permanently, under penalty of overturning and of ensanguining the world. But she softened its servile condition by deifying it. Had not Jesus Christ assumed the form of a slave? She commanded slaves to consider God in those masters who condemned them to shame, to blows, to hunger, and to the bloody games of their amphitheatres.[48] She reminded the masters that they likewise had a Master in heaven, and that threats alone were an offence against the supernatural dignity of their servants, who were their equals and their brethren before God.[49]

Next after justice came charity.

"Charge the rich of this world," wrote Paul to the bishop of opulent Ephesus, "not to be high-minded, nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy; to do good, to be rich in good works, to give easily, to *communicate* to others, to lay up for themselves in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on

[46] Ephes. vi. 1, 4.

[47] Η' οὐχὶ ἄνδρα καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ τέκνον τοὺς τρεῖς λέγει;—Clem. Alex., *Strom.* iii. c. x.

[48] Ὡς δούλοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.—Ephes. vi. 5.

[49] Ephes. vi. 9.

the true life." [60] Paul alluded to the treasury of the *Collect*, providing for and assisting the primitive community of the Church of Jerusalem; it was that same duty of fraternal aid which caused St. John to declare: "He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall put up his bowels from him: how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth."

The agape, or repast in common, was another form of fraternity which had been inherited from the cenacle by the Church of St. Paul and of St. John. Commensality had been, from the earliest ages, one of the symbols of love. But could Christianity more especially ever forget that it was during a supper that substantial love had bestowed itself upon the world? The primitive agape had, then, this double signification to recall at once the union of God with men and of men with one another.

Ephesus witnessed that fraternal table. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury," wrote St. Paul to the Ephesians, "but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father."

Such were the symposia of Christian wisdom. The world scoffed at those "pale men," who lived so frugally. How, in fact, could those temperate reunions have been understood by those who, said St. Paul, "made a god of their belly"? Consider, if you dare, the Feast of Trimallion. Read Juvenal's description of the repasts of Domitian; behold the tables of the Romans loaded with all the products of the world, which they seem to have conquered

[60] 1 Tim. vi. 17–19.

merely to devour; see those golden cups, those torches, those slaves, those garlands of roses, those streams of Cretan wine; listen to those concerts, smell those perfumes, then hearken without to the hoarse murmurs of the weary plebeians who demand of their masters bread and blood—*pane et circenses.* Such is the eloquent contrast of the Roman city and the city of God.

All, therefore, was returning to its place in young society, like the elements of creation in the first days of the world. It was the awakening of consciences: *Surge, qui dormis!* Souls were illumined by the light of Jesus Christ. Darkness did not comprehend it, as St. John complained. But they could already see day dawning, the Orient brightening and about to shed over all things his conquering rays.

IV.

Meanwhile, the manner of worship was laid down, together with morality, in the Church of Ephesus, and it is quite gratuitously that some have imagined a democratic era, wherein, every individual being a priest, all conceivable forms of adoration were produced at will in a community without a head. The Epistle to the Ephesians, as also those addressed to Timothy, already contained the germ of the Oriental liturgy, and permit us to penetrate into the midst of the assembly of the faithful of Ephesus.

The assemblage was named *station*, a symbolical designation, which typified the vigilance of the soldier under arms standing sentinel before the enemy.[51] In his letter to

[51] Herm., *Pastor Simil.*, v. 1.; S. Ambrose, *Serm.* xxv.

Trajan, Pliny denounces two reunions held by the Christians of Asia. The former took place in the morning at daybreak, because Christ had risen from the dead at that early hour.[52] But more generally they assembled in the evening by torchlight; for they dreaded profanation. Slaves place themselves beside their masters, because masters and slaves are of the same family, and Paul has formally instructed Timothy to do away with all distinctions of rank within the Church. Those who wear the white robe are the neophytes—that is, the new-born in the waters of baptism—and St. Peter compares them to "children thirsting for the pure and spiritual milk which will make them grow unto salvation." But St. Paul has prohibited the Ephesians from choosing a bishop from amid those novices, still unstrengthened in the ways of Jesus.[53] Near the bishop stand the deacons. The deaconesses are at the head of the choir of widows and of virgins. Paul has forbidden them "to speak in the assemblies of the brethren."[54] The women range themselves on one side, the men upon the other; the latter with heads uncovered, because they bear upon their brow the authority of God; the former veiled through decency and respect. They were far different from those Ionian females whom the Apostle represents with the plaited hair, covered with gold and precious stones, such as were to be met with trailing their gorgeous robes along the squares of Ephesus.[55] Piety, gravity, sobriety, and modesty are the ornaments of Christian women. "Where upon that neck, loaded with rubies," said Tertullian in his rude eloquence, "can the executioner find place for the sword when they are summoned to martyrdom?"

[52] Pliny, bk. x. ep. xciv.
[53] 1 Tim. iii. 6.
[54] Tim. ii. 12.
[55] Ibid. ii. 9.

In the midst sat the bishop. He is Timothy, and he is young; but "let no one despise his youth, for he has become the example of the faithful in charity, in faith, and in chastity." [56] Frequently John himself brings to the assembly the authority of his recollection, of his inspiration, and of his holiness. All that he afterwards wrote in his Gospel he had previously spoken in these reunions.[57] All those miracles of Jesus which in his book he has thought proper to pass over in silence, as he avows, he had related to his "little children," as he styled them; and those alone knew the good news in its entirety who had then heard it from the lips of St. John.

Meanwhile, prayer begins. They stand upright, both hands extended and slightly raised towards heaven, the face turned towards the East, such as we see the *Orantes* in the more ancient paintings of the Catacombs.[58] It is prayer for all; "for the Lord God wished that all mankind should attain salvation," said St. Paul. The very princes Nero and Domitian, those proconsuls of Asia who denounce and who massacre, are not excepted therefrom. Did not the Lord say: Love your enemies, and pray to God for those who persecute you? In the recommendations for public prayer it is by them that they commence. "First of all," says the Apostle, "I desire that prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings be made for all men, particularly for kings and for all those that are in high stations" [59]—not, certainly, in order to gain an impossible favor, but that God may inspire them to grant the Church peace and liberty: the liberty of good, the peace of prayer.

[56] 1 Tim. iv. 12.

[57] Such is the thought of St. Ambrose: "Joannes prophetavit; id est, predicavit evangelium suum quod postea scripsit omnibus gentibus et linguis et regibus multis."—S. Ambros., *in Apoc. Exposit.*, cap. x., appendix ad oper.

[58] 1 Tim. iii. 8.

[59] Ibid. ii. 1, 2.

That is the rudimentary code of the after-relations of the Church and the state, and the primary basis of future concordats.

But St. Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians: "If any one have a psalm, let him make it heard."[60] Behold, then, a Christian rises to sing his canticle. Fruit of an essentially spontaneous inspiration, he sends up to heaven those "inexpressible sighs" of which the Apostle speaks, and which were the first and ardent effusions of religious lyricism. To speak, to pray, and to sing are the three degrees of language which man has received from his God in order to do him homage therewith.

But the most expressive rite used in the infant Church was the kiss of peace. "Salute ye one another with a holy kiss," St. Paul unceasingly recommended in his epistles. It was after having recited the Creed that the priests and the faithful exchanged that token of fraternity, such as the custom still prevails in the Oriental Church. Finally, they communicated. The bread being broken, each one came, according to his order of dignity, to receive the Eucharist from the hands of the bishop, "standing upright before the Lord," as the Apostolic Constitutions prescribed: *Erecti ad Dominum stemus!* Then they drank in turn from "the sacred chalice" wherein the blood of Jesus Christ had just been consecrated. That was the synaxis, as the Greeks termed it, the communion—that is to say, the perfect union of all the brethren with God and of all the brethren between themselves; for in that divine instant they had really but one heart, one soul, in the soul and in the heart of the Father who is in heaven.

The pagans were carefully excluded from the assembly by order of St. Paul, as also by that of St. John. "Out

[60] Ephes. v. 19.

with the cynics—*fuori canes!*" had exclaimed the great Apostle.

One day, however, about that time and in that very land, one of those cynics boasted of having clandestinely penetrated those mysteries. "I was passing along the streets for some urgent shopping," related some comic hero,[61] "when I saw a crowd whispering amongst themselves. Crato persuaded me to enter amid the Christians, to penetrate into that day blacker than night. He boasted to possess the key to their mysteries. I walked forward. We passed first 'the iron gates with brazen threshold.' Having ascended several pairs of stairs, we finally reached a high chamber with a gilded ceiling, such as Homer has described in the palace of Menelaus; and I, like Telemachus, could not refrain from admiring its beauty. Alas! what I saw there was not Helen, but poor wretches crouched with their pale, thin faces bent to the ground. They did not appear to make any joyful vows; but, putting their heads together, they conversed noiselessly. . . ."[62]

What did they say? Critias explains it to his friend with more comic wit than fidelity, as is generally the case with eavesdroppers. The prayers of the Christians, their fasts, their hopes, their charity itself, are clad in the most ridiculous disguise; abusing the similarity of *Christos*, the name of Christ, with the word *Chrestos* (worthy man), which in Greek is pronounced the same: "Many Christs or Christians, but few worthy men," said the satirist. Another of his pleasantries was to bestow upon them the

[61] See the *Philopatris*, apud Lucian. Edit Bourdelet, Paris, 1615. This dialogue is numbered amongst the works of Lucian; but I have already stated that its anteriority is recognized.

[62] "Video viros in faciem inclinatos et pallescentes. Illi autem videbantur quam pessima optare. Capita autem inter se juncta tenentes consusurrabant."—*Philopatris*, apud Lucian.

name of "airy men"; and he does not deny that it is from Aristophanes, in his piece of the *Birds*, that he borrows that pungent allusion to the morals of those spiritualists who dream of another world and who have ecstasies. But all that wearies Triepho, his comrade. "Come, my dear Critias," says this latter, "enough of these fooleries—*Neque super nugas istas extenderis.* Let these poor wretches alone. Begin the 'Our Father,' and have done as soon as possible by that well-known hymn." [63]

It was with that ironical levity that the world treated the worship of our fathers. But that irony was luminous for history, and the face of Christ is still recognizable under the disgusting spittle wherewith cynicism covered it. Behold the Church, behold the cenaculum, that primitive upper chamber, that clean sanctuary, as Jesus had recommended to St. John. Behold, finally, that *Pater*, already so familiar among the Christians that the pagans themselves cannot ignore it—*celebre carmen.*[64]

They laughed at it. How could such men fail to ridicule a similar prayer? They heard the Christian speak of his Father in heaven, and they beheld that Son of a celestial Father a slave, a beggar, disgraced, and dedicated to contempt as well as to suffering and punishment. They heard him pray for the coming of his kingdom, and it was under the reign of Nero and of Domitian. They heard him wish that the divine will should be accomplished on earth, as it is done by the angels in heaven; and that was the epoch wherein no wills were obeyed save those of blood and of the flesh, as St. John complains. But they, the persecuted, the refuse of the earth, as St. Paul said, were not discour-

[63] "Tace, Critia, missos istos facite, precautionem *a Pater* incipiens, et celebre illud carmen ad finem apponens."—*Philopatris*, ibid. p. 1128.

[64] "Bingham affirms the liturgic usage of the Lord's Prayer in the first century."—*Origen*, v. 125.

aged. "Singular men," remarks a recent work, "who from the depths of their abjection styled themselves *the children of the kingdom—Filii regni!* Each day, each night, in the secret of their voluntary or forced retreats, they confidingly addressed to God the prayer *Adveniat regnum tuum.* And that meant—could they themselves well understand it?—that meant: 'O Jesus! to whom all power is given in heaven and upon earth, immortal King of Ages, put into the minds and the hearts of the powerful of this world the idea of respect for conscience and its rights, even in the poor, in woman, in the child, and also in the slave. Inspire those who hold the sword of the law with respect for human life. May a time come wherein there will be no more gladiatorial combats, wherein slavery will be modified, sweetened, suppressed, and rendered impossible. May the husband no longer possess the right of life and death over his wife, nor the father over his child. May the public worship of luxury cease in our amphitheatres and in our temples. May we everywhere find chaste and charitable priests and pure virgins devoted to God and to their brethren until death.'

"Such were the demands of that little flock of Christians ripe for martyrdom, almost under the axe of the executioner and between the teeth of the lions. They asked it and they obtained it, and for long ages we enjoy the results of their victory; and that conquest has not ceased. Yesterday even it gave liberty to millions of blacks, and to-morrow it will have burst the fetters of the last slaves."[65]

[65] Abbé Lescœur, *Essay upon Millenarianism.*

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. JOHN AND GNOSTICISM.

I.

EVIL had its revenge. A vast struggle was opened against truth, and Ephesus was not slow to witness the accomplishment of the prediction which St. Paul had made to her priests in his final adieu: "I know that after my departure men of your own selves shall rise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." [1]

Therefore, writing to his son Timothy, he says again: "O Timothy! keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so-called, which some promising have erred concerning the faith." [2]

But already, as he feared, "devouring wolves had penetrated into the sheepfold," and Paul thought it right to warn his disciple not to give heed to fables, myths, and genealogies without end, "which minister questions rather than the edification of God which is in faith." [3]

We could not be deceived: these genealogies and theogonies are those of the *Eons;* these are the successive emanations of beings in the bosom of the infinite. That deceptious wisdom is that of the *Gnosis*, according to the very name given it in the Greek text.[4] But Paul had merely

[1] Acts xx. 30. [2] 1 Tim. vi. 20.

[3] Μηδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις, κ. τ. λ.—1 Tim. i. 4.

[4] Τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως.—1 Tim. vi. 20.

foreseen Gnosticism; to John was reserved the task of confounding it.

That was assuredly one of the greatest perils to which Christianity had ever been exposed. Gnosticism was not a partial heresy, contesting such or such a point of revealed dogma. It was, far more than Protestantism in modern times, one of those radical, collective negations, embracing the entire body of the new-born religion, not merely to divide it, but to transform it—as they pretended, to spiritualize it, to elevate it to the height of a philosophical system, and, having thus destroyed it in denaturalizing it, to substitute itself for it. It was the coalition of all ideas as well as of all beliefs against the common enemy; and nothing, more than that collective effort, can prove to us the wonderful perturbation which Christianity had produced throughout the world.

There were two species of Gnosticism: one proceeded from the Jews and reformed Mosaicism; the other came from the Gentiles, transforming their religion and their philosophy.

Besides the Judaizers from Jerusalem, of whom we have spoken, the Gospel met everywhere along its passage, and especially in Asia, the Judaic Gnosis,[6] which had long preceded Christianity. It formed, in the very bosom of the

[6] Iren. *adv. Hæres.*—Edit. Ren. Massuet, Paris, 1710, and the Abbé Freppel upon St. Irenæus. Tertull. *adv. Marcian.* lib. v.; *De Præscription Hæres. contra Gnosticos Scorpiacum.*—Edit. Westin, Bâle, 1673. Epiph. *adv. Hæres.*, oper., t. i.—Edit. Petau, Paris, 1622. Clemens Alex.; Origen. *Fram Gnostic.*, apud S. Irenæum.—Edit. Massuet, p. 349. The *Philosophoumena.*—Edit. Miller. Beausobre, *Critical Hist. of Manicheism*, Amsterdam, 1734. Lewald, *Commentatio de Doctrina Gnostica*, Heidelberg, 1818. Neander, *Genetic Development of Gnostic Systems*, Berlin, 1818. Matter, *Critical History of Gnosticism*, Paris, 1828. J. A. Moehler, *Essay upon the Origin of the Gnostics*, Tübingen, 1831. Münter, *Essays upon Gnostic Antiquities.* Döllinger, *Origin of Christianity*, ch. xx., Paris, 1842. Brucker, *De Philosophia Orient*, t. ii. Ritter, *Christian Philosophy*, bk. ii.

great synagogue, two theological schools of powerful influence. One, the Talmudist school, attached herself scrupulously to the letter of the law, and prevailed amid the sect of the Pharisees, particularly in Palestine. The other, the Cabalistic school, reigned amongst the Jews of the dispersion, pierced the crust of the letter to penetrate its sense allegorically, bringing philosophy and reverie to bear upon faith. Thus, as we may imagine, nothing was more subtle and more arbitrary than its interpretations.

In that diversity two principal currents influenced minds. One descended from Syria, and brought with it the errors of positive dualism. The other came from Greece, from Italy, and from Egypt. That was Philomism, which, from the all-powerful synagogue of Alexandria, was to flood all the synagogues of the empire.[6]

Hellenic Gnosticism sprang from other sources. From the quarter of Greece, Platonism, Stoicism, and Pythagorism breathed upon the Gospel, in order to corrupt it. On the side of Persia and Oriental India, Parseeism, Magianism, and the Zendic system of emanations introduced into the bosom of the Christian religion the indefinite genealogies of the Eons, issued from the depths of eternal light.[7]

Like Jewish Gnosticism, the latter was already in possession of the world when Christianity presented herself to dispute its empire. At the moment wherein unity had been

[6] Origen. *Epist. ad Greg.*, op. t. i. p. 30 et sq. Buddæus, Klenker, Mosheim, find in the Jewish Cabala one of the principal sources of Gnosticism. Lewald thinks it derived from the Zend system. J. J. Schmidt (Leipsic, 1820) and Baur (Tübingen, 1831) consider it as originating in primitive Buddhism. Neander and Matter consider it as springing from all these sources combined.

[7] Manicheism and Buddhism, posterior by a century in their definitive form, pre-existed in germ in the Grecian and Oriental philosophy drawn upon by Manes and Buddha. See *Fragments of the Letters of Manes* in the *Biblioth. Græc.* of Fabricius, t. v. *The Manichean System Examined and Set Forth in its Sources*, by F. Ch. Baur, Tübing., 1831. *Essay upon the Canon, the Criticism, and the Exegesis of the Manicheans*, by Treschel, Berne, 1832.

proclaimed in the state, philosophy had likewise descried her victory of Actium, and had dreamed of fusing together the ideas of the two worlds, brought under the one sceptre. That effort gave birth to pagan Gnosticism. "That hydra," says the author of the *Philosophoumena*—"that hydra which has vomited forth so many blasphemies against Christ was hidden during long years" (*Philos.*, 123). Thus Christianity came boldly to seize upon human reason at the very hour when the East and the West united coalesced their power, ready to crush her, and at the moment likewise when, by a fresh abuse of her strength, she was about to wander astray still more wildly and to degrade herself irretrievably.

Dualism was common to these doctrines; we find it professed by Simon, Valentinus, Menander, and Carpocrates. In the time of John and of Paul a branch sprang therefrom which, under the name of *Docetism*, exercised a powerful as well as fatal seduction.

Dualism professed that from a double principle, the good and the evil, issued the mixed good and evil in the universe. Mind was good, which was born of light. Matter was evil, which was born of darkness. But how could the divine Word, who is essentially light and holiness, have hypostatically united himself to matter wholly buried in evil? In a similar system the real Incarnation was therefore an impossibility; redemption was no less so. If, then, Christ had been seen upon earth in human flesh, if he had suffered therein, it must have been but a pure *appearance*; the very name of Docetism and that of *Docetes*, borne by those of that sect, had no other meaning.[8]

Whence sprang also enormous consequences, moral as well as dogmatic, whereof the multiplied sects disputed the benefit and claimed as their prey.

[8] Docetism comes from the verb δοκέιν, to appear.

Some concluded therefrom that bodies merited neither the honor nor the benefit of the resurrection. Thus the sole resurrection recognized by them was that of souls in holier grace and higher light. It was in Ionia, at Ephesus, in the very heart of the Church of St. John, that two Greeks, Hymeneus and Philetus, propagated that error. St. Paul thus denounced it to Timothy: "Be mindful that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen again from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my Gospel. A faithful saying: if we be dead with him, we shall live also with him. Shun, therefore, profane and vain babblings; for they grow much towards ungodliness. And their speech spreadeth like a cancer: of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus, who have erred from the truth, saying that the resurrection is past already, and have subverted the faith of some." [9]

Others, entering further into practical life, drew from the same doctrine this convenient consequence: that the body, which was invested with no right, should therefore be held to no duty. No solidarity existing between it and the luminous soul, the latter could not be responsible for its actions, how monstrous soever they might be. The sect of Nicolaites, or of the Balaamites, did not recoil before the abominations of those moral conclusions. Horrors ensued, which sheltered themselves under the shadow of transcendent science.[10] Behold the triumph of that platform of

[9] 2 Tim. ii. 8, 19.

[10] The moral world of the Gnostics was divided into three spheres. In the lowest degree were the *hyliquesa*, men wholly preoccupied with matter. Above these came the *psychites*—that is, those who have already some care for the soul. But these are the mediocrists; and the sons of the Church who obey her moral law are banished into that class. Finally, above all, and in a transcendent sphere, are placed the *pneumatics*—that is, the Gnostics *par excellence*, those of the sect, people superior to all, even to the laws of virtue, essentially impeccable, and already arrived at so pure a state that the impurities of the senses, even of the most shameful order, could neither reach nor even disquiet them.

pride. Sensuality began to assume that noble mask of idealism which she still uses so skilfully in our own day.

Furthermore, a monstrous mingling of pantheism, of Docetism, of abstract Gnosticism, and of empty mysticism; the Gnosis, with its ideal, inaccessible god, whence streams the world, is not far different from the Hegelianism of modern Germany, and free thought will be condemned to resume eternally the same arms, blunted and repulsed a hundred times by the impenetrable buckler of the Gospel.

There arose, therefore, upon all sides, false teachers who, under the name of Christians and of Christianity, insinuated their own ideas; falsifying, said St. Paul, by that corrupt mixture, the wine of the Gospel. It is true that, hitherto in nowise accustomed to the idea of one sole and exclusive system of doctrine, the world of thinkers willingly fancied themselves doing Christ service by opening to him their ranks. They thought to honor the Galilean Messias by casting over his shoulders the philosophical mantle of polished Greece. Was not this that monstrous disguise which the Lord had prophesied when he denounced those seducers clad in sheep's clothing, but who were inwardly but ravening wolves?

Thus, during two centuries, the Gnosis was constantly at war with the faith, which it seemed likely to stifle in the cradle. How did it fail so to do? It possessed all means calculated to ensure a victory. It sprang from Asia, at the great speaking point of the civilized world, between Judaism on the one hand and Parseeism on the other. Hellenism pervaded it with all its seductions. The noble genius of the East cradled it with its fables and surrounded it with its symbols and its allegories. Its abstract and dreamy metaphysics attracted the philosophers. If its doctrines were but a convenient eclecticism, its morality was still more accommodating. Even souls thirsting for imma-

terial things found therein, besides a veiled sensualism, enough of ritual and of superstition to allow absent religion to have at least her mirage. Thus, from the very beginning, the genius of evil brought to bear that threefold power of every sect which seeks to obtain entire possession of mankind. Pride was gained through rationalism, the flesh through sensualism, the heart through mysticism. Such is the triple aspect under which heresy appeared at Ephesus, and opposing to the sound teachings of St. John the inventions of Cerinthus, the abominations of the Nicolaites, and the magical and theurgical operations of Apollonius of Thyana.

II.

Cerinthus, a Jew by origin, was a native of the city of Antioch. That was likewise the land of Saturninus and of Bardesanus, other heretics of the time. It is quite remarkable to witness the first shoot of heresy place itself beside the first pontifical chair of St. Peter, and to meet the cradle of the Gnostics in the very place where the disciples of Jesus received their name of Christians.

The whole life of Cerinthus was one of adventures. From Antioch that uneasy spirit passed to Alexandria, where celebrated masters enhanced the fame of the schools of the Museum and of the Serapeum. That city was to become the second home of Gnosticism. Built upon the shores of the Nile to consummate the alliance between Greece and the East, the city of Alexandria had adopted the refinement and the excesses of both of her civilized neighbors, loving to mingle elegant sophistry with voluptuous superstition. There the magus of Chaldea, the hierophant of Osiris, the academician philosopher, and

the Jewish priest jostled one another. There were arranged, in the cedar coffers of the library of Ptolemy, the writings of Aristotle and of Plato beside the Bible of the Septuagint. A common shelter covered the ideas brought forth under such diverse skies. The Jews themselves, so numerous and so wealthy in that opulent city, were well disposed for those concessions of doctrine whereof Philo and Aristobulus had given the example, interpreting Genesis in the spirit of Timeus, and arranging Moses after the manner of Plato. It is probable that more than one Christian suffered himself to be tempted by that profane admixture, if we may credit a letter from the Emperor Adrian, which a pagan historian has preserved to us: "Adrian Augustus to Servian, consul, greeting: That Egypt which thou hast so greatly praised to me, I have learned to know it. I find it light and wavering, as if suspended by a thread, at the slightest breath of renown. Those who adore Serapis likewise call themselves Christians. Those who style themselves bishops of Christ pay their devotions to Serapis. There is no chief of synagogue, whether Jewish or Samaritan, no Christian priest, who is not at the same time mathematician, aruspex, and astrologer." [11]

So it was already from the time of Cerinthus, a century previous, and the Gnosticism of that Jew received a deep impress of that mystical philosophy.[12]

Hence the sophist returned to his native Antioch about the time of the preaching of Paul and of Barnabas. His arrival was the sequel for the troubles mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Zealous for the law, he and his fol-

[11] Letter of Adrian to Servian, his brother-in-law, in the *Life of Saturninus* by Flavius Vopiscus. The same passage is also found in *Fragments of Greek Hist.*, Didot, iii. p. 624.

[12] Κήρινθος δέ τις αὐτὸς Αιγυπτίων παιδείᾳ ἀσκηθείς.—*Philosophoumena*, p. 256.

lowers inveighed against the preachers of the new religion, which burst the ancient shackles of Mosaicism. St. Epiphanius attributes to the artifices of Cerinthus all the opposition which early Christianity met with among the Judaizers.

It was then that appeal was made to the First Council of Jerusalem. Unanimously condemned,[13] Cerinthus dreamed of forming a religion of his own. A Jew and a Platonist, he wished to be a Christian in like manner. Snatching from the Gospel some shreds of truth, he endeavored to weave them into his fancies, and began to preach his curious syncretism of Oriental philosophy, of distorted Mosaicism, and of parodied Christianism. But, strange to say, Cerinthus arrived, through the Gnostic system, at the conclusion that the Mosaic law was evil, after having lately caused such trouble in the Church by his excessive zeal for that very dispensation. That contradiction can only be explained by admitting two epochs for the two erroneous systems of Cerinthus. A Judaizer before the Council of Jerusalem, he afterwards became a Gnostic.[14] Finding himself solemnly repulsed from the Church, it was then that, free from all yoke of faith, he passed over into Asia, where we meet him beside St. John.

Between himself and St. John arose nothing less than the grand question which, since that time, has unceasingly divided mankind. Cerinthus was the first to deny the divinity of Jesus. Christ was not God. There was indeed an infinite, sovereign God ; but the latter resided in his own solitary and incommunicable grandeur. And his only name was *depth* and *silence*. He had not descended thence to create the world, neither to reveal himself to man. For

[13] S. Hieronym. t. ii. Epist. lxxx. p. 344.

[14] See M. Blanc, *Lectures upon Eccl. Hist.*, viii. p. 51,

that subaltern work of creation and revelation he had delegated some unknown power, producing beings and giving laws to the Hebrews. Again, the latter even was too great to deign to become man. She sent her son to redeem the world. That son was the Christ.

But that Christ, only Son of the creative principle, was not the actual person of Jesus. It was but his spirit; it dwelt within him, but it was not him, and the Incarnation had merely been *apparent*. That was Docetism. One instant the divine breath had descended into man, but without confounding itself with him. Until the day of his baptism Jesus had been but a man like other men, born of the woman Mary and of the carpenter Joseph. And as Christ the Spirit, the divine Word, did not dwell within him ere having descended under the form of a dove, so it separates itself from his humanity when the Passion commences. At that sorrowful hour Jesus is but a mortal, weak, suffering, forsaken by his divine *Eon*, and mourning his abandonment upon the cross, whilst the Christ, breaking all alliance with him, returns to his impassible and immortal principle.[15]

The sect made great progress. The devouring *gangrene*, as St. Paul styled it, quickly overran all Asia Minor. Galatia was more particularly tainted thereby. It was a cause of intense sadness to the Apostle of nations, for Gallo-Grecia was his favorite field of labor; and in the Epistle to the Galatians he bitterly complains of the alteration which the Judaic spirit had brought about in that so lately flourishing Church. The heresy of Cerinthus was yet in its

[15] Πρὸς δὲ τῷ τέλει, αποστῆναι τὸν Χριστὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.—*Philosophoumena*, p. 237. See St. Irenæus, i. xxv. Cerinthus united the most exaggerated millenarian ideas to the most absolute dualism. He touched upon materialism. For a full account of Gnostic tenets see Darras, *Church History*, American edit., 1866, vol. i. p. 97.—Translator.

first phase, and it would seem that in that name was personified all the war of Mosaicism against the law of love.[16]

St. John, coming later, had to do with Cerinthus in the second Gnostic period of his errors. Odious as it was to the Apostle St. Paul, that sect was still more directly contrary to the spirit of St. John. The spirit of John was the spirit of charity; and love was not compatible with the pride of those heretics. "They do not strive to practise charity," wrote St. Ignatius to the faithful of Smyrna. "They have care neither of the widow, of the orphan, of the afflicted, nor of him who suffers, whether in prison or at home, neither of him who hungers and thirsts."[17] John was the great Apostle of the Eucharist; the Gnostics, on the contrary, who did not recognize the truth of the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ in his incarnation, would not, consequently, admit it in the host.[18] "These men," said St. Ignatius, "abstain from the Eucharist because they do not confess the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour. Thus, opposing themselves to the name of God, they die in their vain discussions, instead of coming to life in love."[19]

Nothing was more calculated to wound the heart of John. Revolted by their blasphemies, he forbade the Christians all communication with those seducers. It was of them that he wrote: "If any one come to you, and bring not the doctrine of the Father and the Son, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you.

[16] S. Epiphan. lib. iii. c. vi. p. 114.

[17] S. Ignat. *ad Smyrn.*, Edit. Cotellier, p. 35.

[18] The *Philosophoumena*, lib. v. c. viii. p. 152, tells us that they explained in an allegorical sense the words of the Saviour: "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood," etc.

[19] S. Ignat. *ad Smyrn.*, ibid. vi. p. 35.

For he that saith to him, God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works." [20]

St. John loudly professed that religious horror; the mere meeting with Cerinthus was hateful to him. St. Irenæus relates, upon the authority of Polycarp and other early witnesses, that one day the impious wretch almost came in contact with the holy Apostle in the thermæ of the city of Ephesus. The latter had been walking under the portico of the baths, when, entering a hall styled the *Apoclyterium*, where the garments were usually deposited, he noticed a cloak which he thought to recognize. As he was assured that it really belonged to that heresiarch, "Let us hasten hence," said he to his disciples, "lest the wrath of God, falling upon this house, crush us together with the blasphemer whom it shelters." [21]

But it was not enough to flee impiety; it was necessary to fight against it. The Epistles of St. John are filled with evident allusions to him who, in Jesus, separated God from man: "Every spirit, which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God," he then wrote; "and every spirit which dissolveth Jesus is not of God." [22]

But the true answer of St. John was his Gospel. It is not yet time to speak of that book, which we will analyze later in considering it. We shall furthermore perceive that

[20] 2 John x.

[21] S. Iren. lib. iii. c. iii. p. 234. Euseb. lib. iii. c. xxviii. p. 100. Irenæus ait se a Polycarpo accepisse, Joannem Apostolum, cum aliquando in balneum lavandi causa introisset, et Cerinthum intus esse didicisset, statim ex eo loco fuga se proripuisse, cum ne tectum idem cum Cerintho subire sustineret; hortatumque esse comites suos ut idem facerent: Fugiamus, inquit, ne balneum corruat in quo Cerinthus est veritatis inimicus: "Φύγωμεν μὴ καὶ τὸ Βαλανεῖον συμπέσῃ, ἐνδον ὄντος Κηρίνθου τοῦ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐχθροῦ." St. Epiphanius, relating that fact, substitutes Ebion for Cerinthus. Eusebius and Theodoret follow the account of St. Irenæus.

[22] 1 John iv. 2, 3.

the name of Cerinthus is not pronounced therein. John does not argue; he affirms solemnly and absolutely. In his own noble style he sets forth that in the beginning was the Word, that the Word was God, that the Word was made flesh, that the Word made the world, that the Word was Jesus. And it is that Word-God which he saw, contemplated, loved, and handled with his hands from the commencement, and to whom he is ready to render testimony. All the distinctions and the reveries of Cerinthus thus vanish as shadows before light at the first page of the Gospel.

That was affirmation; but that was not as yet profound refutation. The reason of the mystery was, according to St. John, the love of God for man. He explained it thus; and in like manner as he had testified to truth, so was he equally ready to bear witness and guarantee to divine charity.

That was the very heart and the sublime proof of the question. For, in short, what did Cerinthus deny? What is it that all schisms, all heresies, and all separations since his time have refused to comprehend? Indubitably it is neither the power of God nor yet his wisdom. But, strange as well as incontestable! it is solely his goodness which meets with incredulity, and man, beloved of God, obstinately declines to believe in that love. That was the error of Cerinthus. He would not admit that the infinite God was the God-Creator, because his egoism could not accept the fact that the infinitely great God sufficiently loved creatures to form them with his own hands by casting over them some reflex of his own beauty. He disdained to admit that Christ, the Son of God, was at the same time Jesus, the son of the Virgin Mary, because his narrow heart could not conceive that God could love to the extent

of becoming like to the creature beloved. Finally, he imagined that the divinity withdrew from Jesus at the hour of suffering; and the cross was a stumbling-block to that Jew and foolishness to that philosopher, because he could not comprehend that love could go so far as to yield up its life in punishment and in death. Thus the grand mystery which shipwrecked the pride of that sophist was, in reality, the mystery of the love of God.

John seized it at a glance. For that reason his Gospel, the Gospel of the Word, was likewise the Gospel of infinite love; and, disdaining all those quibbles of heartless men, he went at once to the heart of the truth, laying down as an axiom that God was charity, and that the principle of all faith was to believe in it: "And we have known and have believed the charity which God hath to us: *Et nos credidimus charitati.*"[23]

III.

Another heresy arose at the same time, identical in its source, though different in its form and in its character. It was the emancipation of life and of the senses after that of doctrines.

Already, according to Eusebius, Cerinthus, weary of resting upon the austere heights of speculation, had descended to practical consequences of most sensual morality. He pictured a terrestrial reign of Christ wherein they would be inebriated with enjoyments similar to those which the Mussulmans hope to find in the paradise of their prophet.[24] A new sect professed that gross sensualism,

[23] 1 John iv. 16.

[24] "Cerinthus voluptatibus corporis obnoxius carnique addictus, in iis regnum Dei situm fore somniavit, etc."—Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. iii. c. xxix. p. 100.

and the Nicolaites appeared in Ephesus beside the Cerinthians.

It is the Apostle St. John himself who reveals to us, in his Apocalypse, the name and the actions of that infamous sect, who pretended to find in the words of the Gospel the justification of all their turpitudes. Who was that Nicholas whose name they bore? Was he, as St. Jerome imagines, quoting other authors, the deacon of that name elected with Stephen after Pentecost; and must we see therein the first example of those falls which hurl once holy men from the heights of heavenly doctrine into the final abyss of perversion?[25]

The historian Eusebius fully exonerates him from the accusation. But whoever be the author, what St. John tells us of their dissoluteness but too well confirms the revelations of history. Nicolaitism was sensualism clothed and very slightly veiled with Gnostic symbolism. One of the maxims of the Gnosis was that those initiated into its transcendent science, fully escaping the rule of evil powers, contracted no stain by carnal actions. That impure reli-

[25] Those who attribute that infamous heresy to the Deacon Nicholas are: St. Irenæus, bk. iii. ch. xxvii. p. 128. Tertullian (*De Præscript.*, c. xlvii. p. 250). St. Hippolyte in Photius, *Biblioth.*, c. ccxxii. p. 901. St. Hilary *in Matth.*, c. xxv. p. 178. St. Greg. Nyssa *in Eun.*, bk. ii. t. ii. p. 70. St. Jerome (*Epist.* i. p. 4). Cassian (*Collat.* xviii. c. xvi. p. 596). St. Gregory (*in Evang. Homil.* xxxviii. p. 150). Those who exonerate him are: St. Ignatius (*Epist. ad Trallens.*, p. 78; *ad Philadelph.*, p. 202). Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.*, p. 436. Eusebius, *H. E.*, bk. iii. c. ix. St. Augustine (*Homil.* v. p. 7). Clement of Alexandria says positively: "I have learned that he was never seen in company of any other female save his own wife. And as to his sons and daughters, who lived to a good old age, they always practised charity and perfect virginity." A modern author, the Abbé Darras, *Hist. of the Catholic Church*, American edition, 1866, vol. i. p. 48, says: "The Nicolaites, availing themselves of an equivocal expression of the holy Deacon Nicholas, pretended, upon that authority, to support a debauched sect which admitted promiscuous intercourse and the most revolting excesses. We know not on what pretext they mingled the name of Nicholas with such scandals."— TRANSLATOR.

gion could not be comprehended, did we not remember that it was one form of the Oriental worship of the powers of nature. What the *Philosophoumena* tells us of certain infamous adorations practised in the sect of the Nicolaites perfectly coincides with what we know of the shameful practices universally allowed in those days. Furthermore, there were certain *Eons*, certain spirits who elected to be worshipped by those indignities, and thence resulted theories, at once sensual and mystical, which would be inconceivable, were not the example reproduced in our own time.[26]

That fictitious virtue, those strange pretensions to purity of soul in the abjection of sense, to virginity in the dishonor of crime, to angelic innocence in a demoniacal life, are therefore inventions whereof our modern moralists cannot claim the honor. They date from the Gnostics, and St. John combated them in the Nicolaites. Under the shadow of the Temple of Diana, the lover of Endymion; upon the indolent shores of the Caÿster and the Meander, whose intoxicating charms have been sung by poets; opposite that isle of Cos, the birthplace of Venus; in that land of voluptuous myths and Bacchanalian mysteries, that sect promulgated maxims of libertinage and promiscuousness whose revolting details could not be penned. Furthermore, is it not sufficiently instructive to witness, from the very beginning, the facile doctrines of

[26] Εδίδασκεν ἀδιαφορίαν βίου τε καὶ βρώσεως.—*Philosophoumena*, page 258. S. Iren. *Contra Hæres.* xxvii. S. Epiphan. *Hæres.* xxv. A considerable number of theologians, in Germany especially, pretend that the Nicolaites are identical with the Balaamites. Balaam, in its etymology (*Balal*, to lose, and *am*, people), has the same sense as Nicholas (νικᾶν λαόν.) See Hengstenberg, *Balaam*, xxiii. The Abbé Hir (art. upon the *Three Heavenly Witnesses*, *Relig. Essays*, Sept., 1868) identifies them with the Naassenians, p. 388.

independent morality spreading themselves abroad at the same time with the negation of the divinity of Jesus?

Amongst the cities lying along the coast of Asia, Ephesus and Pergamus were most injured by that contagion.[27] The Apostle himself attests it in his Apocalypse. He likewise attests the hatred he bore to that perversion of morals, far more enticing than that of ideas. They were, as he said, the depths of Satan.[28]

How vigorously he must have fought against that seduction! What miracles of holiness and penitential life could stop that vile inundation which threatened to cover the seed of the Gospel? History, which does not reveal it, tells us merely that the colony of the faithful was proof against that temptation. Such is the testimony rendered them by the Saint of saints himself in the Book of the Apocalypse: "I know thy works," he writes to the Church of Ephesus—"I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil, and thou hast tried them, who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaites, which I also hate."[29]

IV.

Evil assumed every form; and John soon found himself confronted by a third enemy of Jesus. Oriental theurgy

[27] God says to the angel of Pergamus: "Scio ubi habitas, ubi sedes est satanæ; . . . habes ibi tenentes doctrinam Balaam, habes et tu tenentes doctrinam Nicolaitarum."—*Apoc.* ii. 12–15.

[28] Τὰ βαθέα τοῦ σατανᾶ.—*Apoc.* ii. 24. The author of the *Philosophoumena* says of them: "Later they styled themselves Gnostics, pretending to be the only ones who knew *the depths*."—Bk. v. c. viii.

[29] Apoc. ii. 2–6.

evoked against him all her occult strength. That new concurrence seemed the more perilous because, opposing miracles to miracles, she accredited herself in the name of God himself, and met an accomplice in that inextinguishable thirst for the supernatural which pervades souls. That was the ground whereon magic placed herself to dispute with the Gospel the empire of the world.

Ephesus was about her most extensive field of battle. It was thither flocked those dirty theoleptics, with haggard eyes and long, dishevelled locks, shaking their heads like maniacs, uttering broken sentences which were held as oracles, and most generally flaunting their rags under the porticos of the temples, whence they received their name of fanatics.[30] In the learned class of the same city magical practices, invocations, evocations, and all the occult sciences had become a passion. We remember that it was there, at Ephesus, that St. Paul had committed to the flames magical books to the value of fifty thousand denarii.

It was by no means dead. Magi came thither from Asia and from Persia with their sabeism,[31] their worship of genii, and the enchantments of that herb *omomi*, a draught whereof produced divine delirium. Egypt yearly landed on her shores troops of diviners, astrologers, and hierophants. Chaldeans arrived there to tell the secrets of the future in mysterious combinations of numbers and in the conjunction of the stars. It was there, as Clement of Alexandria informs us, that the cabalistic letters, styled *Ephesian letters*, were celebrated for their wonderful cu-

[30] From *fanum*, temple. See Döllinger, *Jew and Gentile*, London Ed., vol. ii.

[31] The same as Sabianism, a species of idolatry which consisted in worshipping the sun, moon, and stars (D'Anville).—Translator.

rative or divinatory virtue.[32] They were found written everywhere—upon the pedestal of the statue of Artemis, around her girdle, and upon her diadem. They were worn graven, as a talisman, upon consecrated rings, which they made it a duty to wear continually. Finally, the Hellenic schools of philosophy, or at least those of Plato and of Pythagoras, kept alive that superstitious mysticism by their theories regarding metempsychosis, regarding demons and their sojourn in atmospheric regions, whence they exercised their hidden influence over man and his destiny. Neither the edicts of Augustus nor violent repression had succeeded in curbing that delirium, threatening to public reason, and minds of every order were rushing into it with eager frenzy when the most celebrated magician of the time landed at Ephesus.

Apollonius of Thyana came, therefore, to oppose his fallacious spells to the miracles of the Apostles and his ostentatious virtues to Christian sanctity. That was the only point whereat the antagonism of heaven and of earth had not as yet met and given battle.

But who was that man? What was the character which he assumed or which was imputed to him?[33]

Two centuries had passed away since the imposing figure of Jesus Christ had appeared in history; and it shed around a splendor before which paled the glory of the corypheus of philosophy. It was useless to close their eyes against its light; that incomparable goodness of human nature, infinitely enhanced by the sublimity of divine nature; the pure copy of a sage who was at once the eminent type of

[32] Anaxitas apud Athen., xii. 70—Clem. Alex. *Stromat.*

[33] Upon Apollonius of Thyana or Tyana see Brucker, *Critical History of Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 98; Ritter, *Gesch. der Phil.*, vol. iv. p. 528; Schœll, *Hist. of Grecian Literature*, t. v. p. 58.

a just man; that Legislator of the world who was likewise its Saviour through his blood; that ideal beauty and that infinite power; that God, in short, who was the meekest and the humblest of the children of men, commanded admiration without discouraging envy. His was a superiority which could not be ignored; they wished to counterfeit it, and philosophy sought for a competitor whom it might victoriously oppose to Jesus.

A sage of Cappadocia had lived, in the time of the Apostles, under the early Cæsars. His first biographer, named Mœragenes, mentioned by Origen, considered him a powerful and approved enchanter; Dion Cassius cites one of his predictions; Caracalla wished to raise a sanctuary in his honor; the Empress Julia, wife to Severus, desired his history to be written, and Flavius Philostratus, the rhetorician of Lemnos, presented her a romance, A.D. 196–211.

It was an imitation of the life of Jesus Christ. He was not named therein, and that, doubtless, was the acme of skill. But twenty features betrayed the intention of the author. The birth of Christ had been announced to Mary by an angel; the Egyptian god Proteus likewise appeared to the mother of the enchanter to reveal to her the future glory of her son. Signs had honored the crib of Jesus; similar wonders surrounded the cradle of the great man. The Child of Nazareth went yearly to the Temple, where he astonished the doctors; the young Apollonius, assiduous in the temples, signalized himself therein by still more surprising wisdom. Jesus read hearts; the magician knew the secret of thoughts; he discovers the hidden crime of a Cilician, as Jesus penetrated the mystery of the life of the woman of Samaria. Jesus is God and man; Eunapius claims that double title for the superhuman hero of Philostratus. Jesus performed miracles; Apollonius will do like-

wise, but his will be greater than those of Jesus, for fiction cannot imitate without overdoing, and by that means betrays its invention. Jesus had miraculously raised to life the daughter of Jairus; Philostratus speaks of a young Roman virgin whose funeral procession was met by Apollonius, who restores her to her mother. The possessed are delivered; demons are forced to declare themselves at his voice. The history of Empusa, the betrothed of Menippus, disciple of Apollonius, delivered by him, is the imitation of a narrative of the Gospel of St. Luke. Finally, like the Man-God, it is by one of his disciples, the covetous Euphratus, that the philosopher is sold; like him, he repairs boldly before his judges, fully aware of the fate which is reserved to him; like him, all abandon him; like him, he suffers the insults of tyrants. In short, that nothing be wanting to that parody, the philosopher who is thought dead reappears amongst his followers, shows himself to his friends, and desires them to touch him to assure themselves that he is not a spectre escaped from the kingdom of shades.[34]

By the side of these resemblances, utterly superficial and easy of perception, there was between the Gospel and the book of Philostratus the wide difference which separates the romance of men and the history of God.[35] The unskilful inventors did not even know how to make their ideal sage an ordinary honest man. Either too elevated or too sordid, that type failed to reach its aim or went beyond it. God's measure is not given into the hand of man, that he may form therewith an image to his liking; and nothing is

[34] See, upon that subject, Döllinger, *Origin of Christianity*, p. 194-196; and *Jew and Gentile*.

[35] See Ellies Dupin, *Hist. of Apollonius of Thyana Convicted of Falsity* Amid ancient writers, see Euseb. *advers. Hieroclem.*

better calculated to prove the excellence of the Gospel than that necessarily unfortunate imitation. It serves as counter-proof to its divinity. The forgery has betrayed itself; it was the dream of man. The Gospel remains: it is the book of God; its very enemies have said: "It is not thus one invents," and they have been forced to adore it.

The teaching of that rival of Jesus Christ was marked by the same token of awkward imitation of the Gospel.

Lost as they were in polytheism, it was not difficult to the least far-seeing eye to penetrate that abyss of immorality and of error. Some merely ridiculed it, like Lucian of Samosata; others were melancholily affected by it, and that chaos weighed upon their minds and their hearts. We find that uneasiness amongst all the serious writers of that epoch. Some amid the number, weary of struggle, took refuge in Stoicism; but her morality was austere, besides that, making small account of the Divinity, she thus excluded that mystic element which, at that time especially, was the magnet of souls. Pythagorism accommodated itself far better to the double exigency of conscience and of the heart. Its doctrine tended to recall man to the primitive worship of universal nature, whose multiplied forces received adoration under so many names and such varied forms. Its morality inculcated abstinence, silence, privation, and war against concupiscence. It was the Christian code, wanting the base and the summit—humility and charity. But that was the philosophy of the minority. It proclaimed itself made for the few, for the cenacle of thought, as it is now expressed, to the exclusion of the simple.

Was it not possible to popularize it, and, by diffusing the good leaven among the masses, to transform the whole world? Could not philosophy attempt that which the

Apostles had done for revelation? As far as we may credit his historian, Apollonius formed that plan. Like Plotinus in after-years, he appears to have endeavored to bind together all ancient beliefs, hoping thus to recall public conscience to a purer morality, and degenerate forms of worship to simpler ceremonials. That might be a generous error, and I cannot forget that St. Jerome, and later Sidonius Apollinaris, commended him for it; but it was an error. Such a work was not of man. Abandoned to itself, not possessing divine inspiration, leading to no perspective felicity, imposing uncompensated sacrifices, requiring efforts incited by no hope, that morality wanted both lever and reward. That ruined all. The attempt begun by Apollonius, and afterwards pursued by Plotinus and Porphyry, perished in pomposity, in sterility, and in ridicule; and naught remains of it but the remembrance of a powerless dream of pride formed to discourage those who seek to reform the world without God, with the pretension to do better than he.

Now, what are, at least, the great outlines of that history? What truth disengages herself from that mass of fable wherewith Philostratus has loaded the life of his hero?

After passing his early years in the little town of Tyana in Cappadocia, which was his cradle, Apollonius had been duly placed at the schools of Tarsus, which, as I have already stated, were celebrated throughout Oriental Greece. There the youth had been seduced by the mystic character of the school of Pythagoras, and, separating himself from the noisy crowd of students, had begun to lead that solitary, hidden, and curious life which was to constitute his greatest merit and his highest glory.

Having, therefore, observed during several years the silence prescribed to the Pythagoreans, he had divided, so

it was said, his small fortune between his brother and the poor; then, clad merely in a simple linen tunic, he had successively journeyed through Persia, India, Babylonia, Mt. Athos, Antioch, Cyprus, and Greece, conversing with Brahmins, magi, philosophers, and priests, sounding all the mysteries of science and of nature, culling thence secrets which he afterwards set forth as divine marvels, and thereby astounding and fascinating the multitude, eternally greedy of novelties, of prodigies, and of revelations.

His reputation as a great sage and thaumaturgus had therefore preceded his arrival at Ephesus. He received a welcome befitting his renown. "There was," says Philostratus, "neither artisan nor man of so low or vile condition whatever who did not go forth, forgetful of all labor, to gaze upon him. So that he was followed by so great a crowd of people that it was impossible to approach him; some marvelled at his learning, some at the majesty of his countenance, others at his austere manner of life, others at his curious dress, and the greater portion at all these things combined, whereof they conversed among themselves in divers ways." [36]

There was between that splendor which surrounded the impostor and the silence wherein was buried, in the midst of that same city, the name and the work of John, one of those contrasts which form the eloquence of history.

Chronology being utterly wanting in the work of Philostratus, we cannot state the precise year of that triumphal entry of the Pythagorean philosopher. But the most reliable annalists, Baronius at their head,[37] place the

[36] Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, trans. of Blaise de Vigenère, bk. i. ch. iv. p. 104, Paris, 1611.

[37] Baron. *Annal. Eccl.*, an. 96, p. 742.

sojourn of Apollonius at Ephesus during the time of St. John.

Furthermore, it was of short duration, and the popular favor soon cooled. Must we attribute that disesteem to the secret influence of the Christian colony, and did John contribute thereunto by enlightening the dupes and by unmasking the impostor? Philostratus says merely that his hero met with great opposition. Then his virtues were not so openly manifest as his panegyrist seeks to prove. Some, like Euphrastus, observed that his austere poverty was but a feint; that he was a cunning trader concealed under the philosopher's cloak, and that the divine man was not without some affection for the things of the earth.

Pedantic ostentation tarnished his virtues. "When I was young," said he, "I sought truth; now that I possess it, I must teach it. A sage should speak as a lawgiver, and impose upon nations the doctrine which he embraces." "I receive orders from no one," he said elsewhere; "I send myself." And one day, when a toll-gatherer of the Euphrates, near Babylon, enquired of him on the passage what he carried with him, "I have with me," answered the haughty philosopher, "justice, constancy, wisdom, temperance, modesty, patience, magnanimity, continence, and courage." [88]

Such was the man whom the sophist Hierocles fears not to compare with Him who was "meek and humble of heart." The people, who at first flocked to his lectures under the trees of the Xystos, their curiosity once satisfied, soon ended by discovering him to be merely a charlatan of wisdom. He therefore quitted the city. His historian even hints that the plague, which had just begun to rage throughout Ephesus, was one of the motives which actuated

[88] Philostratus, *Apollon. of Tyana*, bk. i. ch. iv.

his flight, and he sought refuge in the city of Smyrna, which demanded him as her lawgiver.

Such a retreat was scarcely reconcilable with the contempt of death professed by the philosopher. Thus, shortly after, a deputation brought him back to Ephesus, where he was entreated to manifest his science by indicating the cause of, and assigning the remedy for, the calamity which desolated the city.

The spirit of that man was then clearly proven. The reply of the enchanter was one of those acts of cruelty which argue the inspiration of him whom the Scriptures style the first homicide. There was an old man, well known in Ephesus, who begged alms upon the public square and at the gates of the temples. Formerly, when a mendicant had applied to St. Peter and St. John at the gate of the Temple of Jerusalem, the former had aided him by stretching forth the hand and healing him. But what was a beggar in that antiquity whose maxim was that to assist such people was to perform a double wrong to one's self and to the poor person, whose misery was prolonged by protracting his life?[39] Consequently, remembering that in former days the great divinators, Chalchas, Tiresias, Epimenides himself, required a victim in public calamities, Apollonius demanded the death of that aged mendicant; and, pointing him out to the people as the genius of plague, he commanded him to be instantly stoned to appease the gods. "Now, as they were all thunderstruck," here relates his historian, "esteeming it by far too cruel an act to lay hands upon so miserable and unfortunate an object—that of a poor foreign beggar who lived by their alms, and who

[39] Illud quod dat perdit, et illi producit vitam ad miseriam.—Plaut. *Trinummus*, act. ii. sc. ii. v. 58-59. "What matters a poor man?" disdainfully asks one of the guests of Trimalcion in the *Satyricon* of Petronius.

implored with clasped hands their pity and their mercy, urging them not to suffer him to be so inhumanly massacred, with many other pleas well worthy of commiseration" —the philosopher himself began the execution. His example was followed. They rushed upon the innocent victim; and when the unfortunate wretch, crushed under a shower of stones, turned his glance towards Apollonius to supplicate or to curse him, "See," said this latter, exciting the crowd, "that flame from his eyes—it is the look of a demon; it is the fire of hell." And he openly proclaimed that that murder was to prove the salvation of the city.[40]

That was at least the ruin of Apollonius. The doctor and the doctrine had pronounced judgment against themselves; and the cruel inhumanity of the philosopher prepared a noble victory for the apostle of charity. The prodigies of pride and of cruelty were answered by miracles of all-powerful goodness. It was at that time, Baronius tells us, that John, redoubling his zeal for his dear Ephesians, performed amongst them those cures whereof we have already spoken, and the resuscitations of which we shall speak later.

Then the holy Apostle opposed a teaching of love to homicidal practices. Could we believe, did not history furnish us the proof thereof, that certain Gnostics, horribly consequent with their works, had a species of worship for the serpent and for Cain, the murderer of his brother?[41] Therefore St. Peter and St. Jude have compared them to that wicked one. John alludes to it, but taking a more elevated view: "My little children," he unceasingly repeats, "he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his

[40] Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, bk. i. ch. iv.

[41] The *Philosophoumena* upon the sect of the Ophites, Edit. Miller, p 119; and the dissertation of l'Abbé Hir, *Relig. Essays*, Sept., 1868.

brother, is in darkness even until now. But he that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is no scandal in him. But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth: because the darkness hath blinded his eyes. . . . Whosoever is not just, is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother. Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and killed his brother. And wherefore did he kill him? Because his own works were wicked: and his brother's just. . . . Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself." [42]

[42] 1 John ii. 9–11; iii. 10–15.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

I.

THE vast coalition of evil and of error which we have just described called for a striking testimony to Christian truth and to the holiness of God. Then it was that St. John wrote his Gospel.

What was primitively specified by the name of Gospel was not a book: it was word of mouth. Jesus Christ had written nothing. His Apostles at first acted like their Master: they did not write, they preached. Directly inspired by God, proven by miracles, derived from remembrances fresh and pure in their sources, the Word alone sufficed for the foundation of the kingdom of God. That was the breath which the Scripture had declared should renew the face of the earth. It was a fiery breath; but it was merely a breath.

Meanwhile, the early missionaries were not slow to consign that word to writing. Some had at first set forth doctrines according to the requirements of the time: that was the object of the Epistles. Others had related the very life of Jesus: that is what we know and more specially reverence under the name of Gospel.

If we seek the reason of, and the proper character of, each of the three narratives styled synoptical, we remark, in the first place, that they were suited to the three great

families of nations who shared the rule of souls or the empire of things.

The Gospel of St. Matthew had been written for the Jews, amid Jews, by a Jew, and in accordance with all the customs of the Jewish people. It was even drawn up in the language of that nation, if, as it is generally believed, the text known under the name of the Gospel to the Hebrews was merely that of St. Matthew in its primitive form.[1]

The Gospel of St. Mark had been written at Rome, for the Romans, under the eye of St. Peter, during his certain sojourn in that great city, mother and mistress of the rest.[2]

The Gospel of St. Luke was thoroughly Grecian in its aim, its origin, and its destination. Born in the city of Antioch, Greek in language and in manners, companion of St. Paul, and his historian in the Acts, Luke the learned seemed the predestined evangelist of the Hellenic population, whereof Paul, his master, was the apostle.

Thus the Son of God had enlightened, as if by three rays of his divine face, the three great families of ancient civilization, in like manner as he had consecrated their three languages by making use of them in the inscription of the cross.[3]

St. John did not ignore these authentic histories of the life of his Master. Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and St. Jerome say that he had read them; and he himself hints it in his First Epistle, wherein he declares that he writes nothing to the faithful which the latter have not

[1] Papias, apud Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. xxxix.

[2] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. xxix., vi. xiv. Papias, ibid. Clemens Alex. apud Euseb. iii. xxiv.

[3] This St. Irenæus seems to insinuate when he says: "Neque autem plura numero quam hæc quatuor sunt Evangelia, quoniam enim quatuor regiones mundi sunt, etc."—S. Iren. *adver. Hær.* iii. ii. n. 8.

previously learned elsewhere.[4] Some even think that we should attribute to him the Greek translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew, such as we possess it, and which has replaced the lost original.[5] They declare that he did it for the use of his dear children of Asia.

Be that as it may, since the three synoptical narratives, the expositorial point of view, as well as that of Christian demonstration, had changed. It was no longer necessary to have recourse to the prophecies to convince the Jews that the synagogue was dead. The will of God was to be traced in characters of fire upon the smoking ashes of their ruined sanctuary. Mosaicism, though still powerful, was not alone concerned; Gnosticism was the forced lists where doctrine and history were compelled to descend. What it was specially requisite to prove in the person of Jesus was no longer the Messias of a thenceforth vanquished and scattered Israel; it was the God whom the universe was to adore—not a god of the second or of the third order, an intermediary between the world and its Author, but the very Creator of the world. And for that it sufficed to bring forward the most profound portion of Christ's teaching, did there yet exist some one of his disciples who had faithfully treasured it and could so transmit it.

John—son of Zebedee, lately disciple, friend, and confidant of that God, since become the Apostle of Ionia and the Patriarch of Ephesus, placed by his mission at the source of error—having rested his head upon the very heart

[4] "I have not written to you as to them that know not the truth"—1 *John* ii. 21.

[5] The superscriptions bear sometimes the name of St. John, sometimes that of St. James of Jerusalem, as the Synopses of St. Athanasius (S. Athan. *Opera*, t. ii. p. 155).

of Divinity, was the best prepared to combat falsehood, as he was the more fully instructed by truth.

He had forgotten naught of his Master's history. It had so deeply penetrated his faithful soul that it could never be eradicated therefrom. If the greater and dearer a remembrance, the more tenaciously it fastens itself upon the heart wherein it takes root, what must have been the memory of Jesus dwelling in the soul of St. John! That holy souvenir, then, eclipsed all others. Ever present to the budding Church, it presided over all the conversations of the faithful, became incarnate, as it were, in their moral and religious life, keeping ever present before them the divine Model, whose features were preserved in their hearts and minds.

Then Jesus Christ himself had promised the Apostles that the Holy Ghost should come to bring to their remembrance all that he had said to them, as well as all that he had done, like the fire which renders legible writing invisible without its action. "But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."[6] St. John, who relates that prophetic promise, was to witness its principal accomplishment in himself.

"Considering," reports Clement of Alexandria, "that the other Evangelists sought specially to bring into relief the human side of the Man-God, John, at the prayer of the friends who surrounded him, urged by the divine Spirit, composed in his turn the Gospel of the Spirit." Clement, adds Eusebius, held this testimony "from bishops more ancient than himself."[7]

[6] John xiv. 26.

[7] Joannes omnium postremus, cum videret in aliorum Evangeliis ea quæ

Thus the Apostle was solicited to write. His book was to spring from the pressing requirements of the Christian Church and from the entreaties of the brethren. Clement had pointed it out; St. Jerome explains it: "The Apostle St. John," says he, "he who was beloved by Jesus above all others, wrote his Gospel, at the request of the bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus and other heretics, especially against the error of the Ebionites, who had begun to spread their doctrines, and who pretended that Christ had not existed before Mary." [8]

But who were those friends spoken of by Clement of Alexandria? Who were those bishops mentioned by St. Jerome at whose request the beloved Apostle composed his Gospel?

More than a century since the learned Muratori discovered in the Ambrosian Library at Milan a fragment of a manuscript which casts the most vivid light upon that history of the composition of the Gospel of St. John. Is that curious fragment from the pen of Caius, priest of the

ad corpus Christi pertinent tradita esse, ipse divino afflatus Spiritu, spiritale Evangelium familiarium suorum rogatu conscripsit. Πνεύματι Θεοφορηθέντα πνευματικὸν ποιῆσαι Εὐαγγέλιον.—Clemens Alex. apud Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.*, vi. xiv. The car y fathers, followed by all the doctors of the Church, have compared the four Evangelists to the four symbolic creatures who, in the vision of Ezechiel, formed the car of God. The man is employed as emblematic of St. Matthew, who begins his Gospel with the recital of the human genealogy of Jesus Christ. The lion is the emblem of St. Mark, who begins with "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." The ox, an animal used for sacrifice, is the emblem of St. Luke, whose Gospel commences with the sacrifice of Zachary. Finally, the eagle, with his lofty flight, his intrepid mien, is the emblem of St. John, whose vigorous wing elevates him above the things of earth, whose eye penetrates even unto the throne of the Divinity!—Darras, *Hist. of the Catholic Church*, American edit. 1866, vol. i. p. 63.—TRANSLATOR.

[8] Joannes apostolus, quem Jesus amavit plurimum, novissimus omnium scripsit Evangelium, rogatus ab Asiæ Episcopis, adversus Cerinthum aliosque hæreticos, et maxime tunc Ebionitarum dogma consurgens, qui asserunt Christum ante Mariam non fuisse.—S. Hieronym. *de Viris Illustr.*, c. ix.

Roman Church? Must we with Bunsen attribute it to Hegesippus? Are we to conclude with Hug that it is merely a translation from the Greek, or is the Latin text which has been found the original, as Wieseler supposes? Amid these diverse opinions two things are unanimously admitted. Firstly, the fragment has come to us from the Church of Rome. Secondly, it cannot date back beyond the second century; and everything guarantees it that authenticity and that authority.[9]

The memory of Jesus Christ was then a contemporary remembrance. See now how that precious passage confirms and develops all that St. Jerome and Clement have already told us concerning the book and its author.

"The fourth Gospel is of John the disciple. Those who had been disciples with him, and the bishops of Asia of his jurisdiction, urged him to write it. John said to them: 'Fast three days with me, and we will then communicate one to the other that which shall have been revealed to each individually.' During the night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John alone was to write all in his own name, but subject to the approbation of all the other brethren."[10]

[9] The canon attributed to Muratori bears its date. In fact, the author tells us that the *Pastor Hermas* had been written very recently (*nuperrime conscriptus*). Now, that work was addressed to Pope Clement I. at the end of the first century.

[10] Here is an exact copy of the portion of that fragment relative to St. John, with the restorations of Wieseler: "Quarti (um) evangeliorum Joannis ex decipulis (discipulis). Cohortantibus condecipulis et episcopis suis dixit: Conjejunate mihi odie (hodie) triduo, et quid cuique fuerit revelatum, alterutrum nobis enarremus. Eadem noctem revelatum est Andreæ ex apostolis, ut recognoscentibus cuntis (cunctis), Joannis (Joannes) suo nomine cuncta describere'. . . . Quid ergo mirum si Joannes am constanter singulo etiam in epistolis suis proferat dicens in semeipsu (semetipso): Quæ vidimus oculis nostris et auribus audivimus, et manus nostræ palpaverunt, hæc scripsimus. Sic enim non solum visurem (visorem), sed et auditorem, sed et scriptorem omnium mirabilium Dominus (Domini) per ordinem profitetur."

Thus was the Gospel drawn up; and we shall find in the Gospel itself the most convincing guarantee and proof thereof.

The disciples, or at least some of their number—amongst others St. Andrew, the Apostle of Achaia—were therefore living when John wrote. On the other hand, at that time Jerusalem was no more; the Evangelist everywhere speaks in the past tense of the existence of places which were then but a melancholy heap of ashes.

It is, then, after the ruin of that unhappy city, and before the death of Andrew and of the disciples—that is to say, between the years 70 and 80 of the Incarnation—that we must place the drawing up of the Gospel. Such is, in fact, the date assigned to the holy book by the superscriptions of the most ancient manuscripts. They fix it at about the fortieth year after the Ascension; and from that time, furthermore, the Gnostic, Docetic, and Ebionite doctrines, stigmatized by St. Paul, were sufficiently spread to require a refutation similar to that opposed to them by the Gospel of St. John. We cannot, therefore, admit the gratuitous opinion which represents the Apostle as writing at the age of ninety years, almost at the closing days of his protracted existence."[11]

That took place at Ephesus, as we are expressly assured by the disciple of St. John, who was undoubtedly the best qualified to pronounce, since he lived almost at the same time and in the same place. "John, the disciple of the Lord," wrote Irenæus—"John, who leaned upon the bosom of Jesus—wrote his Gospel in the city of Ephesus in Asia."[12] The most ancient manuscripts of the Syriac

[11] See *Introduction to the Books of the New Testament*, by Dr. Reithmayr, translated by M. de Valroger, t. i. p. 98.

[12] Ἰωάννης ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ Κυρίου, ὁ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος αὐτοῦ ἀναπεσών, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξέδωκε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας διατρίβων.—S. Iren. *adv. Hæres*, lib. iii. cap. i.

version, styled *Pechito*, and the Coptic version, designate the same city.

We clearly perceive, in fact, from the holy book itself, that if the facts related took place in Palestine, it was not written in that land. It is only amid strangers and to strangers that an explanation is required of the most elementary names of the language and of the country, such as those of Messias, rabbi, etc. Strangers alone would need to be told of the ancient enmity existing between the Samaritans and the Jews, of the custom of burials and that of ablutions. If St. John explains these things, it is because his book is composed far from the land of Judea, at Ephesus in Asia. The other opinion, which places the drawing up of the work at Patmos during his exile, has neither the same ancientness nor the same solidity. Again, the synopses of the Scripture in the works of St. Athanasius decide that, admitting the latter supposition, the Gospel was published at Ephesus.[13]

All, therefore, points to that city. It is said even that the original manuscript of the Apostle was long preserved there, and Peter Martyr, Bishop of Alexandria, still invoked its decisive authority in the beginning of the fourth century. "The autograph," says he, "the very autograph of John the Evangelist, has been until this time, by the grace of God, preserved in the most holy Church of Ephesus, where it is still venerated by the faithful."[14]

Finally, the collective character which Clement, St.

[13] Τὸ δὲ κατὰ Ἰωάννην Εὐαγγέλιον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννου ὄντος ἐξορίστου ἐν Πάτμῳ τῇ νήσῳ, καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐξεδόθη ἐν Ἐφέσῳ διὰ Γαΐου τοῦ ξενοδόχου.—Synops. S. Script. S. Athanas., t. 2. p. 202. Also Dorotheus (*Bibl. Max. Patrum.*, t. iii. 421) and Suidas.

[14] Αὐτὸ τε τὸ ἰδιόχειρον τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου, ὅπερ μεχρι νῦν πεφύλακται χάριτι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν τῇ Ἐφεσίων ἁγιωτατῇ Ἐκκλησία, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν πιστῶν ἐκεῖσε προσκυνεῖται.—Peter Martyr, Bishop of Alexandria. See *Chronicon Alexandr.*, p. 11, Edit. Dindorf, Bonn, 1832.

Jerome, and the fragment of Muratori ascribe to the drawing up of the work is faithfully reproduced in the first lines of the Gospel of St. John. It is said in that canon that the Apostle undertook that divine history at the instigation of the bishops his brethren, in concert with them, to condense the testimony of the last survivors amongst the disciples of Jesus; and notice, at first, the sacred historian, speaking only in the plural, clearly shows thereby that he speaks in the name of all: *We have seen his glory*, he says in the prologue; he expresses himself in the same manner every time that he seeks to confirm his testimony. Then, when he addresses the divine book to all nations in his First Epistle, that epistle presents that solemn narrative of the life of Jesus but as the collective account of the general depositions of the witnesses of his life. "What *we* have seen, what *we* have heard, and what *our* hands have handled of the Word of Life, *we* declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with *us*."

A particularity worthy of remark! The Apostle whom history represents to us as beside St. John as the collaborator, or at least the instigator, of that drawing up of the fourth Gospel, is Andrew, his friend.[15] And when, assuming the pen, John first relates the manner wherein he was summoned to be the first witness of the life which he describes, he adds that he was not the only one called that day; he names his companion. And he whom the sacred historian places beside himself in the company of Jesus is Andrew[16]—it is the Apostle whom the fragment of Caius associates with St. John in the work of the Gospel; the same who, reserved to behold the closing days of the

[15] Eadem nocte revelatum est Andreæ ex apostolis, etc.—Ap. Muratori, vide supra.

[16] John i. 36. See above, chap. i.

apostolic mission, as he had witnessed its commencement, comes now with John to draw up the authentic act of works which, like him, he had seen accomplished from the beginning.

The disciples and the bishops contemporary with St. John, St. Andrew at their head, were not merely to inspire his Gospel; they were likewise to approve it, says the passage cited above: *Recognoscentibus cunctis.* The text of that approbation is still before our eyes; it is laid down in the closing verse of the Book of St. John. Thus, as it is manifest and recognized by all the best interpreters, that final paragraph is no longer by the inspired writer. John has laid down the pen, which he has yielded to the disciples; the latter have read the Gospel which he has just composed; having examined, verified, and recognized it as authentic, all unanimously approve it, countersign it, and give it their sanction in these words:

"This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these things, and hath written these things, and we know that his testimony is true." [17]

Before the precision of a text so formal, so fully conformable with tradition, so clearly enlightened by it, all discussion regarding the authenticity of the Book of St. John should cease. It seems that God chose that his most divine history should bear, as it were inscribed upon its face, the name of its author; and that no guarantee should be wanting to that work, destined to become a sign of contradiction between inexcusable error and inexpugnable truth.

A legend adds that when John, commencing his Gospel, proclaimed the eternal generation of Christ by these sublime words: "In the beginning was the Word," a clap

[17] John xxi. 24.

of thunder resounded, and lightning suddenly flashed in the serene sky. That fact is an allusion to the name which the Lord had bestowed upon John when he himself styled him "the Son of Thunder," and is the united emblem of the power and the splendor of that heaven-descended eloquence.

Another tradition, likewise agreeing with history, is the remembrance of the fast by means whereof the Evangelist summoned celestial inspiration to his aid.[18] Such a book is not formed merely of human ideas. It requires the thought and dictation of God. It demands prayer and sacrifice; and it was amid those unutterable groanings that the Holy Ghost animated the writer with the most wonderful words ever heard on earth.

II.

John began his work with a different design from that of his predecessors. He sought primarily to complete their testimony; then to arrange facts in a more connected order; finally, to throw clearer light upon the divinity of the Lord. From that triple thought was to issue a book identical in basis with those of his brethren, but distinct as to form and conception. Therein we find the reason of the special character of the Gospel of St. John.

Having read the histories composed before his own, as St. Jerome observes, the Apostle noticed therein striking omissions.[19] Although inspired like himself, and drawing

[18] Et Ecclesiastica narrat historia: Quum a fratribus cogeretur ut scriberet, ita facturum se respondisse, si indicto jejunio in commune omnes Deum precarentur. Quo expleto, revelatione saturatus, in illud proœmium cœlo veniens erupit: *In principio*, etc.—S. Hieronym. *Comm. in Matth.* Prolog. Item canon Muratori, ut supra.

[19] Cum legisset Matthæi, Marci et Lucæ volumina, probaverit quidem textum historiæ, et vera eos dixisse firmaverit, sed unius tantum anni historiam texuisse, etc.—S. Hieronym. *de Scriptor. Eccles.*

their information from sure sources, the first three writers had not been, as he had, the witnesses of all the life which they had written. Matthew had been called to the apostolate the seventh in order; Mark was not one of the twelve; Luke was a stranger to the Apostolic College. Therefore their account clearly required completion upon three points.

It was, firstly, the commencements of the public life of Jesus, the primary interviews of the Master and the Apostles, the relations which connected the school of John the Baptist with that of the Messias, and which John the Evangelist must so well have known.

Secondly, the different visits made by Jesus to Jerusalem, and all that sojourn in Judea, filled with the greatest miracles and the noblest discourses, whereof the portico of the Temple, the house of Bethany, and the cenacle had been the immortal theatre.

Finally, it was likewise the resuscitated life, whose manifestations, so decisive for the faith, hurriedly mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark, were far from being complete in the Gospel of St. Luke.

John applied himself, in the first place, to filling up those chasms, to such an extent that those three points, elsewhere too much neglected, became the ruling subject and the inheritance of his book. It would be an exaggeration to say with Eusebius that that necessary complement was the sole design of the author. That hypothesis would lower the fourth Gospel, and could not agree with the inimitable unity which distinguishes it. But the Apostle had always kept it in view, as his work clearly reveals. Whatever the others have told John passes over in silence; what they have developed he abridges; what we already know he supposes; what we have already read he recalls; whatever is wanting he supplies; and it is in that that

John specially separates and distinguishes himself from the Synoptics. He intentionally differs from them, but is not therefore opposed to them; and, if he ordinarily avoids walking in their footsteps, he meets them, nevertheless, sufficiently frequently to prove that they follow the same route—the one which Jesus pointed out to them, and which he illumines by the brightness of his divine face.

In the second place, John perceived that the preceding Gospels were evidently wanting in order and in chronology. Much more occupied with teaching a doctrine than with writing a history in its regular and successive development, governed by the custom of oral instruction, the Synoptics had, in the arrangement of facts, sought rather the information of readers and the fruits of the discourse than the exact divisions of time.

John undertook to remedy that defect. It was particularly necessary in his narrative, the aim whereof forced him to interrupt the plot to avoid becoming a repetition of the others. But if chronology alone could connect in St. John those recitals often so widely apart, it was likewise to serve as a guide in the Gospels of the other three Evangelists. St. Luke declares that he had already thought of setting forth in order the history of the life of Jesus. It was John who accomplished it. Four Paschs, some other festivals of the religious year, clearly indicated each in its proper place, mark out the route of the historian, and assign their date to the principal events of the life of the divine Master. All the synchronisms made of the Gospel have started from those points elucidated by St. John.

Thus the divine life regained her rightful position as to time; thus essential ideality moved amid the best determined reality. The Evangelist reputed the most spiritualized became equally he whose exact and historic character

was the most apparent; and John formed the bed wherein the Gospel, hitherto too vague, was thenceforth to flow between determinate banks.

The Apostle himself indicated a third design which was the principal object of his work. "These things are written," said the Evangelist, "in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in his name."[20] It was not, therefore, merely to complete, neither was it solely to set forth in order, that that work was undertaken, but to prove the divinity of Jesus.

But was that a belief and a doctrine personal to St. John? Had not the three Evangelists laid it down before him? Was not the divinity of Christ equally manifested by all the Epistles of St. Paul?[21]

In that same Asia where St. John wrote that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, that the Word was God, and that the Word was made flesh," St. Paul had written that, "being in the form of God, Christ had thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man."[22] In the same places where John professed that that "Word had dwelt among us full of grace and truth," St. Paul had preached that "Christ had dwelt amongst us in all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." There where St. John proclaimed "that the Word, being God, had taken the form of a man," St. Paul declared that "the benignity and humanity of the God-Saviour had appeared to us."

[20] John xx. 31.

[21] See against that error of Vacherot (*Crit. Hist. of the School of Alexandria*), Gratry, *Essay upon Sophistry*, iv. p. 23.

[22] Philip. ii. 9.

Therefore, although it has been so reported, John is not the first who wrote that the Word was God, and, in speaking thus, he in nowise enunciates a new thought with regard to St. Paul. From the Synoptics to St. Paul, from St. Paul to St. John, that doctrine neither varied, progressed, nor changed. He who wrote this definition, "Christ, who is God blessed for ever," was not St. John, but St. Paul.[23] And John, when addressing his Gospel to the nations, himself took care to warn his beloved ones that he was no innovator, and that his teaching was "the same word which they had heard from the beginning."

What the other Gospel historians had merely mentioned St. John fully developed. They had affirmed the divinity of Christ; St. John demonstrated it. They had set it forth by relating his life; St. John discussed it by quoting his discourses. The others had made it the subject of his history; St. John laid it down as a formal thesis, constantly followed it up, and made it the converging centre of all his thoughts. Some amongst the miracles of Jesus served as better proofs of that thesis; these were the ones which he selected, as he himself explains: *Scripta ut credatis.* Those of the discourses of Jesus which more clearly argue his disregarded divinity were specially brought forward by him. Such, for example, are the disputes with the Pharisees, so fully developed in St. John. The historical character of the book loses nothing thereby, but the dogmatic and apologetic character is more felt; and John thus attained the chief aim of his work, namely, to oppose an indirect but formal refutation to the incredulity of his own time and of the future.

[23] Rom. ix. 5.

III.

From the triple design proposed to himself by the Evangelist sprang the primitive originality of the Book of St. John. The circumstances of time and of place, and especially the genius of the author, further influenced its spirit and its language. Thus the work was stamped with a unique character of which nothing can express the excellence, but whereof all explains its noble and superhuman singularity.

It was, firstly, the position of St. John with regard to the Gnostic schools which modified the language and the drawing up of the fourth Gospel.[24] Forced to address himself to philosophical sects rather than to popular reason, John did not repudiate the lofty speculations which the sages of Asia sought to find in science. Religion then commenced to become a science. The divine teaching scattered throughout the Gospel required to be gathered into a systematic body, and John the Evangelist was to be at the same time he whom antiquity unanimously styled "John the theologian." Thence the dogmatic profundity of his book. It is no longer the Gospel of the accomplishment of ancient prophecy, neither is it merely the narrative of the events of a divine existence; it is the gospel of idea, but of idea living in faithful history.

We must, however, remark that, enunciated by the Lord, the sublime thoughts which we admire in St. John have not been, and could not be, foreign to the narrative of the synoptical authors; and by reason of that resemblance John is of their school, because they are, like him, of the school

[24] The Gnosis was sufficiently spread at Ephesus at the close of the first century to enable this Gospel to suit perfectly the situation of minds. The *Philosophoumena* enables us to trace the elaboration of history; and the curious systems which that work explains to us carry us back most positively to the time of St. John.

of Jesus. The accommodation which commentators attest existed but as to form. It in nowise affected the historic fidelity of the book. St. John has not lent his words to his Master, as some seek to prove in our own day. Thus the philosophical expression of the *Word*, that which most recalls the contemporary school, does not once appear upon the lips of Jesus. As to other locutions, such as the words of life, of grace, of truth, of darkness, of light, they are the language of Luke, of Matthew, and of Mark, especially of Paul, as well as that of John. If the latter repeats them more frequently perhaps, it is because they entered perfectly into the habit of those men for whom darkness and flesh were the expression of the principle of evil, as light and mind were the synonyms of the principle of good.

Those reservations made in due measure, we do not deny that the Evangelist may have preferred certain expressions of his own time and midst. Is it more surprising than to find Paul at Athens quoting classic poetry? In that same Ephesus we witness that Apostle leave the synagogue, where they no longer hearken to him, to preach in the school of a learned man of that city.[25] That is not, therefore, mere supposition. The Gospel, amongst those Greeks, had felt the necessity of addressing herself in the outset to cultivated men. But in making use of words peculiar to the learning of the time, John transfigured them. He restored them to the sense bestowed upon them by the Word of Truth, to whom no one had listened more attentively than himself; and, whilst conforming himself to human language, he the better reported the discourses of God.

These discourses of God, quoted in St. John, had almost all been pronounced in Judea and at Jerusalem. That was a fresh cause of the elevation which distinguishes his Gospel.

[25] Departing from the multitude, he separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.—Acts xix. 9.

One does not speak with doctors and with princes of the people as with lake-fishermen. In Galilee, before a rustic audience, on a ship, upon the sea-shore, on a grassy hill, before the poor and the lowly, familiar parables and simple conversation suited the condescending goodness of Jesus as well as his wisdom. In Judea, under the porches of the Temple of Jerusalem, to the teachers of the law, to proselytes gathered from all the various synagogues, to strangers come from all polished cities, different words were requisite upon the same doctrinal basis. There Jesus of Nazareth had been the prophet promised to Israel, and his benefits sufficed to prove his mission. Here he is a doctor, a master, as he is constantly styled in St. John—*Rabbi*, *Magister*—and his divinity reveals itself by his discourse. Now, these discourses of Jesus, related in St. John, were such that, by the avowal of his enemies themselves, "never man spake like that man."

That excellence of the teaching of Jesus to the doctors has passed into him who has constituted himself its echo, and it forms, with regard to the familiarity of the other Gospels, a contrast which explains the superiority of the Gospel of St. John.

The character of the Apostle, what he tells us of his life, what we have witnessed of his intimate contact with the soul of his Master, likewise had a great share of influence and of inspiration in the eminent singularity of his book.

Origen wrote: "The Gospel of St. John is, as it were, the flower of the Gospels. He alone could penetrate to that depth whose head rested upon the bosom of Jesus, and to whom Jesus gave Mary as mother. That confidential friend of Jesus and of Mary, that disciple treated as a second self by the Master, was alone capable of the thoughts and sentiments condensed in that book."

"He drank secretly from that divine spring,"[26] said St. Augustine, writing upon the Last Supper. And if it be true to say that the style is the man, what man was better qualified to portray in Jesus Christ the all-powerful Word and the gentle Lamb of God than the genius, at once ardent and meditative, of the son of thunder, of the beloved disciple? For that reason the grandeur and goodness, the sublimity and tenderness, of Jesus, all the features of the Saviour, are reflected in his Gospel as in the purest water. It is the most astonishing as well as the most moving and the simplest of all the Gospel narratives. We find it reproducing all the facts which it relates, really resuscitating Jesus Christ before our eyes, a miracle of candor as of sublimity, always winging its flight towards eternal light, but ever buoyed up by the breath of love.

Then St. John was a virgin. Let soulless criticism approve or not approve that moral element in human things, all must agree that it is a considerable intellectual power in divine things. It is especially upon that subject that the penetration of the eye of the mind depends upon its purity: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." Plato himself demanded of the disciple of wisdom that calm integrity which allows the mind ever to raise itself freely towards light. The eye of the soul, like that of the body, has wider or lesser range. "There are," as Origen wisely observes, "divers forms of the Word, under which he reveals himself to his disciples, conforming himself to the degree of light of each, to their stage of advancement in sanctity. If he manifested himself upon the Mountain of Transfiguration under a form far more sublime than that under which he appeared to those who remained at its base, unable to reach its summit, the reason

[26] Ex illo pectore in secreto bibebat.—St. August. *Tract.* xxxviii. *in John.*

was because those who remained below had not eyes capable of contemplating the glory and the divinity of the transfigured Word."[27] St. John had by his holiness attained those blessed heights.

Thus, when the fathers exalt the genius of John, it is principally to his virginity that they ascribe it. "The Evangelist was a virgin," wrote St. Ambrose, "and I am not astonished that, better than all others, he could express the divine mysteries—he before whom was thus opened the sanctuary of celestial secrets."

The style of the Gospel received those inspirations, felt those influences. It was that spontaneous style where thought is everything. Expression sprang, therefore, forthwith, without self-seeking, animated by truth, and spread itself through the whole like fused gold, under the fire of the Holy Ghost. Thence those vivid outbursts which are as the eagle-flights of that imprisoned genius, and also sometimes that strangeness of speech, which together compose the physiognomy of the style of St. John. The Spirit of God, descending from heaven, found human eloquence but a vase too contracted to receive him. He therefore overflows it. The ordinary forms of language are shivered; thought struggles with expression, which cannot contain it; and, besides the primitive sense, a new and profound meaning indefinitely prolongs the light of words.

St. Denys of Alexandria, in his admiration, does not doubt that contact with the schools of Ephesus and constant intercourse with the Greeks had polished that fisherman. "Nothing in him," says he, "in the least improper, unsuitable, or which savors of earth. It would seem that he had received the gift not only of seeing all,

[27] Origen. *contra Cels.*, iv. 16.

but likewise that of properly reporting it."[28] However, the Hebraisms, the Syriac forms, and the Chaldean locutions betray that that Greek belongs to another tongue and to another land. The Galilean reappears here in the Ephesian, and the two countries of John are sufficiently distinguished merely from his style. The perfect knowledge which he has of particular circumstances of Judaism shows that he appertains to it by right of birth; but the unconstrained manner whereby his compatriots are judged by him proves that he has broken with the synagogue. The sententious, abrupt, and rhythmic style of his phraseology manifestly proceeds from the Hebraic element, whilst the relative perfection of his language clearly points out to us the new nation amidst whom his life is closing. As to the repetitions so habitual to him, Michaëlis sees merely a sign of the extreme old age attributed to the writer.[29]

Thus, throughout, the book reveals the author, the author justifies the book. A late critic says: "If, in default of historic indications, we were reduced to discover, by means of simple probabilities, who is the true author of the fourth Gospel, the learned would immediately halt before St. John, so clearly the character of that Apostle and the circumstances of his life are revealed by his word.[30]

[28] Evangelium et epistola non modo emendate quod ad Græcum sermonem attinet, verum etiam cum summa elegantia, tum in verbis, tum in argumentationibus et in tota orationis compositione præscripta sunt. Utroque enim præditus erat Evangelistes, sermone nimirum ac scientia, cum hæc duo ipsi Dominus concessisset, scientiam simul et eloquentiam: Ἀμφοτέροις αὐτῷ χαρισαμένου τοῦ Κυρίου, τόντε τῆς γνώσεως, τόντε τῆς φράσεως.—Dionys. Alex., apud Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. vii. c. xxv.

[29] Michaëlis, *Introd. to N. Testament*, t. iii. pp. 394–396.

[30] Reithmayr, *Introd. to the N. Testament*, t. ii. p. 92. Pressensé says the same: "Never was there a more striking concordance between a book and a writer than between the fourth Gospel and the person of John, such as the history of the first century represents him to us"—*Life of Jesus Christ*, p.

It is the most noble writing which the earth had ever possessed and will ever possess, even amongst those born by the inspiration of God. "By a unique phenomenon," it has been justly observed, "the continual repetitions, the vulgar forms, the foreign color, the ignorance of epistolary style, and even the incorrection which characterizes that diction, but the better display its sublimity."[31] There is no other reason for it than that supreme rule of composition and of eloquence: "The more a word resembles a thought, a thought a soul, a soul God, the more beautiful is the whole." What unequalled beauty must therefore emanate from a book whose words are the image of the thought and of the soul of God!

"The hand of an angel has written it," as Herder says; and, before him, St. Augustine proclaimed the like: "John began to be an angel: *Cœperat esse angelus!*"[32]

Augustine again compares the Gospel to a high and serene mountain, whence the Divinity allowed himself to be contemplated. "And what mountain is that!" exclaims the holy doctor, "what elevated genius! Behold John, who soars above all earthly summits, all ethereal space, beyond the starry regions, above the celestial choirs themselves and the legions of angels. Why speak to him of earth and of heaven? They are but creatures. Why speak to him of what heaven and earth contain? Creatures again. Even concerning spiritual beings? They are the work of God; it is not God himself. But if you seek to attain to the

233. And Renan: ". . . The reading of the work especially is calculated to impress one. The author speaks therein always as an eye-witness; he wishes to pass for the Apostle St. John. If, therefore, that work is not really by the Apostle, we must admit an imposture which the author avowed to himself. There is no example in the apostolic world of a forgery of that nature."—*Life of Jesus*, introduction, pp. xxv.–xxvii.

[31] Berger de Xivrey, *Essay upon the Text and the Style of the New Testament*, p. 3.

[32] S. August. *in Joan.* t. iii. p. 2; *Tract.* cxxiv. p. 288.

Divinity, mount those heights whereon dwells the Evangelist; enter into his light."[33]

"Ah!" exclaimed Chrysostom, speaking to the people of Antioch, "you desire to penetrate the secret of palaces, to know the actions of the emperor. Come, learn all that was said and done by your God. It is his best friend who will be your informant; for he bears within himself the eloquence of God. Did an angel descend to communicate to us the language of the heavens, how eagerly you would hasten to receive it! Now, he who speaks to you comes truly from heaven. In him dwells the Spirit before whom the future is as the present, and who knows the works of God as well as our souls possess our own secrets. No longer vaunt the thoughts of Plato and of Pythagoras. They seek; John has seen. In the outset he takes possession of our whole being; he raises it above earth, sea, and heaven, bears it higher than the angels and beyond all creatures. . . . Then what perspective unfolds itself before our vision! The boundless horizon recedes, limits are effaced, infinity appears, and John, the friend of God, reposes but in God!"[34]

That beginning of the Gospel filled with admiration philosophers themselves. St. Augustine relates, in his *City of God*, that a Platonist desired that it should be graven in letters of gold upon the frontispiece of temples.[35]

Having begun his book by that sublime prologue all filled with the infinite, St. John ended it by the avowal of his powerlessness to say all and to reach that inexhaustible abyss of grandeur, of virtue, and of benevolence. "There

[33] S. August. *in Joan.* cap. i. p. 201.
[34] S. Joan Chrysost. *in Joan Evang. Homil. i.; Opera*, t. viii. pp. 25, 26.
[35] S. August. *de Civitate Dei*, lib. ix. p. 29.

are also many other things which Jesus did : which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." [36]

John owned himself struggling with that sentiment of the ineffable which is the fatal revelation of our limits—a sad feeling frequently even in connection with great human affairs, but which is the despair of the genius of man with regard to the grand things of God.

It is at this stage in the Gospel that the bishops of Asia and the last surviving disciples of Jesus Christ affixed their collective sanction to the work whereof they at once attest the sincerity and the author. "His testimony is true." These are the closing words of the book. Are they not likewise the final conclusion of whoever reads the work? "Of all historic works it is the truest, the simplest, the most immediately seen and transmitted. It would seem that the light of Christ's face has impressed itself with all its movement and its every expression upon the immaculate soul who has preserved it to us. Like those images graven by things themselves under the sun, which, in proportion as we gaze at them more minutely, ever appear truer, so the admirable Gospel, at each attentive glance of the soul, ever shows Christ truer, more sublime, and more beautiful." [37]

Therefore it is truly the disciple who wrote it. That soul was alone capable of receiving so pure an impress. We know now that his testimony is true; and it is not without a thrill of adoration that, coming nearer and nearer, by the heart of St. John, to the heart of Jesus, we seem to lay our hand upon that adorable heart whose eternal throbbings we follow in the Gospel.

[36] John xxi. 25. [37] P. Gratry, *Sophists and Criticism*, concl., p. 392.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORD MADE FLESH, ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

I.

MEANWHILE, the divine book was not merely a narrative. It was a refutation and a revelation. All the dissenting sects received therein the formal contradiction to all their corruptions of faith and of law. Then, those clouds of error once dissipated, from the very prologue shone forth in the Gospel, as the sun in the sky, the divine doctrine of the Word of God made man, truly God, truly man, upon which the Evangelist had fixed his eagle glance, and upon which we must likewise fasten our own.

The refutation primarily attacked Mosaicism. It was necessary to finish with the *Johannites* remaining in Palestine or scattered throughout Asia, who still refused to believe in Jesus Christ, recognizing the Messias in John, his precursor. These sectaries were numerous. St. Paul had met them at Ephesus. Apollos, one of their number, had gained them great credit in the synagogues. Who could doubt of their importance and of their obstinacy when we find them still existing in a part of Asia, where they yet retain the worship and the baptism of John the Baptist, their master?[1]

[1] We find actually in Turkey a sect of heretics named Tobeans, who appear to be the descendants of the disciples of John the Baptist. They now form a population of from 1,300 to 1,400 souls, scattered throughout several towns. They know no other baptism save that of John, which they renew yearly. That prophet is for them the only true Christ, and festivals solemnize the

A portion of the Gospel was directed against them. The commencement especially appears drawn up with that aim.

As they recognized only the testimony of the prophet, that was the witness opposed to them by the book of the Evangelist. They held him as the Messias, and in that book the precursor solemnly declared that he was not the Christ. They sought but his baptism, and in that book the baptizer appealed from that baptism to that of another greater than himself. They denied the divinity of Jesus, and in that book John the Baptist saluted in Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy One of God. He who thus constituted himself the reporter of his sayings had heard them all; he had begun by being one of his disciples. What could be more authentic?

We may easily, in opposition to Grotius and to Norberg, not consider that testimony of the son of Zacharias the ruling idea of the fourth Gospel, but it is very certain that it occupies a chief place therein. Thus the sacred historian restores those two great personages and their two subordinate—not rival—schools to their rightful positions. And if the words of the Lord proved the prophet to be "the greatest amongst the children of men," the testimony of John the Baptist clearly promulgated Jesus Christ to be, not the Son of man merely, but the Son of God.

The gnosis of the pagans or of the semi-pagans, the gnosis of philosophic and Hellenic nations, no less visibly preoccupied St. John. It was in that view especially that the theologian laid down the doctrine of the Word.

But what was the Word, and what did that term signify in the learned tongue of the Greeks and of the Jews?

principal events of his life. Norberg, a learned Swede, is the first who has made known that singular sect and given a translation of a portion of their books, written in Syriac. (See Norberg, *Codex Nazaræus ac Syriace transcriptus, Latineque redditus*, London, 1815.)

Plato, in the *Timæus* and in the *Epinomis*, had spoken of the Word. But with him the Word is not the substantial and personal divinity; it is the type and the superior reason of things in divine thought, an ideal of perfection, an intelligible being, as that whereof modern atheism would willingly make the only God to be believed. But with him, again, that ideal is nowhere a person; and that difference places a wide abyss between the *Timæus* and the Gospel of St. John.

"There is, then," writes the least suspected critic of our own day—"there is, then, no historic reason for believing that John had known Plato, or even the posterior works of Platonic philosophy. It is, furthermore, utterly useless to suppose it; for the doctrine of the Word, properly so-called, is foreign to Grecian philosophy, and proper to the East." [2]

Jewish tradition and the Biblical interpretation of the synagogues better understood the Word. John, who employs that term, and who does not explain it, gives to it, therefore, a sense understood by his readers; and it is not, as I can see, rash to conclude that, upon that point as upon others, ideas were afloat, yet vague and confused, which the Gospel condensed and demonstrated by its revelation.

We know the magnificent eulogy which *Proverbs* has made of Wisdom and of its eternal generation in the bosom of God: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made." [3] "The source of wisdom," says Jesus, the son of Sirach, "is the Word of God on high, and her ways are everlasting commandments." [4]

[2] M. Vacherot, *Crit. Hist. of Alexandrian Philosophy*, t. i. p. 100.
[3] Proverbs viii. 22, 23. [4] Ecclus. i. 5.

Elsewhere she is represented as "the image of God, the splendor of his light, the reflex of his goodness." Thus Word and Wisdom identify themselves in that book. Both resemble therein rather a person than an allegory of the intelligence of God; and these thoughts are similar with those of St. John.

However, the divine personality of the Word is still more clearly put forth in the *Targums*, written by Onkelos, whom the Jews look upon almost as inspired by God. In his Chaldaic paraphrase Jehovah and the Word mingle and blend together.[5] It is the substantial Word who has created the world; it is the Word whose voice has resounded through Paradise to summon Adam; it is he who dictated the Law of Sinai.[6] Such were the doctrines dear to Mosaicism in the time of St. John.

Philo adopted them, but only to disfigure them by the adulterous mixture of Neoplatonism with rabbinism. The Alexandrian Jew well understood by the Word the Word of God, and he gave to him the honor of the work of creation. But what an infinite distance between the Word of Philo and that of the Gospel! The one supposes matter existing with God, eternal like God, who thence forms the world; the other has created matter, and was before matter was. One is but the *instrument* of the creative work; the other is the author himself, its principle and its cause. In Philo the Word is reduced to being merely *the shadow of God*, as he himself styles him;[7] in St. John the Word is God. Philo sees in the Word but a generalization of divine thought, not elevating itself beyond a cold abstraction. John adores in the

[5] Verbum Jehovah adjuvat illos, et schechina regis inter eos.—*Targumin* upon the 21st verse of Numbers, ch. xiii.

[6] See *Targumus* in Joan xvi. 1, and the Zohar, bk. lxxiv. iv.

[7] Σκιὰ Θεοῦ δὲ ὁ Λόγος αὐτοῦ ἐστιν.—Philo, *Allegories of Laws*, ii.

Word the only Son of God really and personally existing in the bosom of his Father. Philo everywhere insists upon the impossibility of the divine nature uniting itself directly with the human creature, whilst the Incarnation is the first and closing word of the fourth Gospel. The antithesis is absolute; can we misunderstand it, and have those even opened the works of Philo who dare to represent him as the inspirer of St. John?[8]

As to the Word of the Gnostics, it was a power of the second or of the third order, superior to men, but inferior to God. A substance created of God, and emanated in time from the bosom of Infinity, it took rank amid the genii which formed the chain of the Eons. It was one of the first radiations of the *Pleroma*, and between the Word of the gnosis and that of the Apostle there is the entire distance which separates pantheism from the Christian Trinity.

By giving to the Son of God that divine name of the Word, did St. John intend to refute the systems of his time? We cannot doubt it after the formal assertion of Jerome and of Irenæus.[9]

Still, neither the books of the heretical gnosis, the feeble light of ancient tradition, nor the paraphrases of rabbinical theology taught him the mysterious doctrine of the Word such as he has imparted it to us. "One day," he relates, "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse: and he that sat upon him, was called Faithful and True, and with justice doth he judge and fight. And his eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many diadems, and he had a name written, which no man knoweth but himself:

[8] Upon the impossibility of assimilating the Word of Philo to that of St. John, see Doerner, *Hist. of the Doctrine and of the Person of Jesus Christ*, introduction, pp. 27–58.

[9] S. Hieronym. *Catal. Script. in Joan.* S. Iren. *adv. Hær.*, i. xxvi.

and his name is called: THE WORD OF GOD."[10] After the recital of that ecstasy need we seek for St. John other master save the Holy Ghost, other school but that which the Lord opened for him in heaven itself?

Thanks to that inspiration, the Evangelist disengages himself from erroneous or shadowy scholastic doctrines. He overturns some, he throws light upon others.

To the Word of the Gnostics, created and born in time, the Evangelist opposes the eternity of the Word: "In the beginning was the Word."

To the Word of Plato and of the Academy, a superior but purely ideal conception of human understanding, the Evangelist opposes the reality of the Word and of his divinity: "And the Word was God."

To the Word of Philo, simple instrument of God in the creative work, the Evangelist opposes the creation by the Word, principle of all that is: "Everything was made by him."

To the dualist system, setting forth two concurring principles of things, the Evangelist opposed the Word, sole principle and sole creator of every contingent being: "All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made."

Finally, to Docetism, rejecting the truth of the flesh of Christ, the Evangelist opposed the astonishing formula: "And the Word was made flesh."

II.

But, not content with ruining a lying science, the Evangelist exposed a sublime doctrine. The doctrine of the prologue, developed throughout the book, is the

[10] Apoc. xix. 11.

knowledge of the Word according as we consider the Word in the bosom of God, the Word in the work of the world, or the Word in souls. St. Justin, in the second century, was the first to distinguish these three rays of the eternal Sun.

There is, primarily, the interior Word, contained in the bosom of God, eternally united to the divine substance.[11] That interior Word is nothing else but his thought, the product of his mind, co-existent produce of being which is all act, perfect intuition which God has of himself, image of his nature and splendor of his glory. "Consider," says Bossuet—"consider that brightness, that ray, that splendor, which is the production and, as it were, the son of the Sun. As soon as light exists, it shines forth. God is a light which eternally subsists, and his brightness, which is his Son, is eternal like himself. 'O Father!' said Christ, 'glorify me with the glory which I had before the world was with thee!'"

Bossuet seeks other images of the eternal generation of the Word. Christian metaphysics, from St. Augustine to St. Anselm, from St. Thomas to Malebranche, has sounded that abyss without ascertaining its depth. In fact, that name of Word, or of divine Word, is the highest and most spiritualized image of the nature of the Son whereof language is capable; but how are word, thought, and intelligence, which with us are but acts or faculties of the soul, persons in God?

That is the mysterious part. Unfathomable mystery! John, who has enlightened it by an analogy, has not pretended to demonstrate it. "No one hath seen God," says he, "save the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father."[12] To understand him, it would be neces-

[11] C'est ce que Saint Justin nomme le Λόγος ἐνδιάθετος.—Apol. i.

[12] John i. 18.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

sary to be the very Word of God; and, without this, every mind must exclaim with Bossuet: "Ah! I am lost; I can go no further. I can but say, Amen, so be it. My heart says, So be it, amen. What silence! What admiration! What astonishment! What new light! But what ignorance! I see nothing, yet I behold all. I see that God who was in the beginning, who subsisted in the bosom of God, and I do not perceive him. Amen, so be it; behold all which remains to me of the sermon which I have just preached—a simple and irrevocable acquiescence through love to the truth which faith shows to me. Amen, amen, amen. Once more amen, for ever amen!" [13]

But the Word, the essential manifestation of God in the bosom of Eternity, likewise manifests himself in time by his works. Then we consider it as the revealed Word, as the exterior Word "expressed without," according to the sense of the word employed by St. Justin.[14]

The first of his works is that of creation: St. John taught us that "all was made that was made by the Word." Already the Old Testament had given it to be understood "the Word of the Lord had strengthened the heavens." That is the thought which St. Paul develops as follows: "In him, in Jesus Christ, were all things created in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible: all things were created in him and by him. And he is before all, and by him all things consist." [15]

But what is the character assumed by the Word in the creation? Must we, with Adalb, Maïer, and Bremser, say that God *decrees* it, that the Word *executes* it, that the Spirit *co-ordains* it? Shall we declare with Bossuet that

[13] Bossuet, *Elevations on the Mysteries*, 12th week, elev. vii.

[14] He styles it, in fact, Λόγος προφόρικος—Word borne without.—Apol. i. § 15. The distinction of the Λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and of the Λόγος προφόρικος is likewise clearly expressed in the *Dialogue with Trypon*, § 62, p. 210.

[15] Coloss. i. 16, 17.

the *power* of the Father draws it from nothingness, that the *wisdom* of the Son disposes it in order, that the *love* of the Spirit warms and vivifies it? Should we not rather consider the Word as the primitive type, and the living ideal upon which the great Architect built the universe?

According to the doctrine of the fathers, his impress is everywhere. "What is," asks St. Francis of Sales, quoting St. Prosper—"what is that testimony and that show which the Word gives us of himself, if not the unutterable beauty of the world which he has spread before our eyes? The sky, the earth, the sea, are the noble letters of a book wherein is written the Word of God. The sky is a Decalogue where God has revealed himself, says Clement of Alexandria.[16] And the world, repeating the goodness, the wisdom, and the beauty of its Author, everywhere sings the wonders of the Word in that harmonious music which the sage Pythagoras thought to hear in the heavens." [17]

However, that was but a reflection of the glory of the Word, but the shadow of his face. A more direct manifestation of the life of God was required; a more precise expression than that rough image. Viewing it, as but in a mirror, in what St. Paul styles the elements of the world, humanity ardently desired to see and to hear it. It cried, therefore, towards him, says St. John Chrysostom; it said to him: "My God, I burn towards thee with an intense love. It is torture to me to be unable to speak with thee. I cannot behold thy essence, because it cannot meet my vision. But at the sight of thy works my heart throbs with love. I have not yet seen thee, O Word! but I have seen the sky, and I rejoiced, and I said: The heavens declare the glory of God. I saw the earth, and I

[16] Αὐτὴ φυσικὴ Δεκάλογος οὐρανοῦ.—Clem. Alex. *Stromat.*, vi.
[17] St. Francis de Sales, *The Love of God*, bk. ii. ch. iv. sect. iii.

said: The Lord's is the earth, and the fulness thereof. I saw the day and the night, and I exclaimed: Thine is the day, thine also is the night. Thou hast created the aurora and the sun. And as he who loves, though he behold not the object of his affections, if he perceive his garments, fancies to see him and rejoices, thus I view joyfully created things, filled with a species of transport, and I unceasingly address to thee these words: 'As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God!'" [18]

In the doctrine of St. John the Word makes one step further. He is not merely creator of the material and exterior universe. It is with the moral world, with the world of souls, that he enters into relation as light and life. "He was in the world. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world."

Justin the Apologist compares the Word, thus spread throughout humanity, to a fruitful germ of truth and of virtue which will ripen under the sun of the Gospel; and such is the sense of the name given him by that great man, disciple of St. John, in the following century.[19]

God speaks: that is the second degree of his manifestation in the bosom of the universe. The material world had but his impress; souls receive his Word. A familiar Word, it resounded throughout human consciences, where it dictates the precepts of natural law; it resides in the depths of human reason, and the wisdom of nature is but the echo of its voice.

To that confidential and mysterious expression of the Word God has joined another by an exterior and sensible revelation. His word has resounded from the summits of

[18] St. Chrysost. in Psalm xli.

[19] Σπερμαλικὸς Λόγος.—S. Justin, *Apolog.* ii. § 13.

Horeb to those of Sinai; it has thundered through the menaces of prophets; it has sung, prayed, and wept upon holy harps; and nations have retained its echo in their religions and in their philosophies.

It was thus that the Word "was already in the world."

He was *light*. "There is," says Fénelon, "a sun of minds which illumines them far better than the visible sun enlightens our bodies; that sun of minds gives us at once its light and the love of its light to seek it. That sun of truth leaves no shadow, and it shines at once in both hemispheres. It gives us light by night as well as by day; there is no point without where its rays reach; it dwells within each of us. . . . That sun never sets; it is a day without darkness. It enlightens savages even in the deepest and most obscure caverns. It opens closed eyes, it cures diseased eyes, and makes itself loved by those even who fear to behold it." [20]

"That light enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." Thus, says St. Chrysostom, "it is not only the Jews who receive its brightness; the Gentiles likewise are penetrated therewith. The very angels," he adds, "brilliant as they are, shine only with the light borrowed from him." [21]

Direct and pure in the bosom of ancient Judaism, broken and divergent in Gentilism, it was therefore the universal light at which all wisdom lighted her torch. Thus St. Justin already explained it to the sages of his time; and, if Christianity be the religion of the Word, Christianity therefore is as old as the world. She flourished in germ wherever the sincere love of the true and the good has existed, and that sun of souls had a long aurora as the beautiful mid-day shone over our heads. "The fountain of wisdom," says

[20] Fénelon, *The Existence of God*, first part, ch. iv.
[21] S. Chrysost. *in Joan Evang. Homil.* iv.

the Scripture, "is the Word of God on high, and her ways are everlasting commandments."[22] He inspired sages before he made the saints.[23] True philosophy is no less his debtor than true religion. All the fathers of the first ages thus comment the large and generous word of the well-beloved disciple, and Lactantius does not fear to add: "Did there exist some one who, taking the truth scattered amongst the sages, and diffused amid the sects, should collect and condense it in one body, that man would be with us."

Then, "the Word was *life*." "But it is no longer the gross life of plants," as Bossuet explains, "to grow, to produce flowers, buds, and fruits; neither is it animal and mute life, to see, to taste, to feel, to go hither and thither as one is impelled. What is called life is to hear, to understand, to know one's self, to know God, to love him, to desire him, to contemplate him in hope, then at last to possess him in full enjoyment; that is true life, and the Word is the source thereof."[24]

Christ unceasingly repeats in St. John: "I am the life. I descended from heaven that you might have life. I will that men should have life, and should have it more abundantly. He who dwells in me hath eternal life"—a life of holiness in this world, of beatitude in the next. Antiquity undoubtedly possessed the germ thereof; but few men lived with that life. They knew no other save that of sensation, of appetite, and of instinct—that sung by Horace and vaunted by Epicurus. That brutishness did not merit the name of life, and that vile mixture of pride and of pleasure was rather the aliment of death.

[22] Ecclesiasticus i. 5.

[23] Καὶ οἱ μετὰ λόγου βιώσαντες χριστιανοὶ εἶσι, κἂν ἄθεοι ἐνομίσθησαν, κ. τ. λ. Those who have lived in a manner conformable to reason are Christians, did they even pass for atheists. Such were, amongst the Greeks, Socrates, Heraclitus, and those who resemble them, etc.—S. Justin, *Apolog.* i. § 46, p. 110.

[24] Bossuet, *Elevations*, week xii. elev. ix.

"The light, which is life, shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. The Word was in the world, and the world knew him not." Such is the résumé of the whole history of God and the entire history of man during four thousand years. God had firstly given us his image in the work of his hands. He had, furthermore, given us his divine Word in his natural or written revelation. But these great gifts of the Word not having sufficed to keep us in truth and goodness, will God do more? Is there not a manifestation of love superior to speech; and having the image of God, may humanity not have his presence?

III.

The human mind said no. I have already remarked that, in those latter times, Judaism had a decided tendency to withdraw God from man. The Talmud represents to us the Rabbi Gamaliel exaggerating the incomprehensibility of the sovereign Being. They had concluded thence that that great Being could in no manner either reveal or communicate himself to men. The Septuagint, the *Paraphrases* of Onkelos, had already weakened, in that novel point of view, the manifestations of the Divinity related in the Bible.[25] Even amid the faithful people the abyss between man and God was more deeply rooted than ever.

A similar tendency existed among the Greeks. The spiritualism of the best philosophers, seeking to purify the idea of God, had but succeeded in banishing him into

[25] Thus, when Jacob exclaimed that he saw the *Eternal* face to face (Gen. xxii. 30), Onkelos makes him say: I saw the *Angel of the Eternal* face to face. Where the text bears: They saw the God of Israel (Exod. xxiv. 10), we read in the paraphrase: They saw *the glory of God*. Where the serpent says to Eve: You shall be *like gods*, the commentator translates: You shall be happy *like princes*, etc.

inaccessible heights. "God does not unite himself to man" is the final conclusion of the wisdom of Plato.[26] "Divine nature," said that philosopher, "being unable to enter into communication with man, it is through the intermediary of genii, mediums between heaven and earth, that the Divinity holds intercourse with us."[27] The Alexandrian Philo is still more exclusive: "Never," cries he, "will mortal and immortal dwell together."[28] The genii or demons, the angels, the Eons, whom Platonism, Philoism, and Gnosticism placed between the world and God, were for them necessary mediators merely because every direct way was closed which leads us to him.

Reason fled from God; but the heart yearned for him. The pagan world writhed in that antinomy.

The God of reason dwells in the splendor of immutable felicity, far from the woes of mortals, and the storms of our ephemeral existence could not agitate the ever-limpid surface of his beatitude; our heart craved a gentle Providence capable of being moved by our cries of grief. The God of reason is the just and perfect God, whose glance could not rest upon our stained earth without awakening his wrath; the heart needed a God whose mercy would forget our sins to see only our sorrows. In the highest heavens dwells the God of reason; the heart demanded a God dwelling amidst us. All polytheism is but a blind attempt to draw together man and God. All philosophy isolates them from each other; who, therefore, will conciliate these contradictory desires? What new revelation will show us at once an inaccessible God and an approachable God; a God elevated above all worlds, and a God mingling with the world; a God whom we dare not

[26] Θεὸς δὲ ἄνθρώπῳ οὐ μίγνυται.—*Banquet*, xxiii. [27] Ibid.

[28] Θέμις γὰρ οὔκ ἔστι θνητὸν αθανάτῳ συνοικῆσαι.—Philo, *Allegories of the Sacred Laws*, i. 3.

name, and a God whom we can love; a God who performs justice, and a God who pardons; a God different from man, and a God similar to man?

Commentating the Canticle of Solomon, Origen represents to us the human soul, mystic bride of the Word, summoning in these terms the divine Spouse who is the object of her desires:

"I have been overwhelmed with blessings; I have abundantly received the pledges and the gifts of my divine marriage. During my espousals with the Son of the King of the Heavens, with the first King of every creature, the angels gave me the law as a present of my Spouse. The prophets, filled with the Holy Ghost, have, furthermore, inflamed my love and awakened my desire of beholding him;[29] they have portrayed to me his noble beauty and his mercy. Therefore I cannot support the waiting of such love.[30] But behold, he approaches; behold his servants, who mount and descend the luminous ladder. I therefore turn towards thee, Father of my Spouse, and I beseech thee to have pity upon me, and to send him to me, in order that he may speak to me no longer merely through his servants, but that he may come himself, and that I may hear himself speaking and teaching."

"The soul," adds Origen, "even amid pagans, thirsts to unite herself to the Word. She also has received an earnest of divine marriage. As the law and the prophets were future pledges for Israel, so the law of conscience, intelligence, and liberty were for the human soul, even without the bounds of Judaism, spousal presents. No philosophic doctrine has been able to fulfil her wishes. She demanded the light and the visit of the Word.

[29] Origen, *in Cantic. Cant.*, bk. i. Edit. Delarue. [30] Ibid.

Neither men nor angels suffice her; she requires the embrace of the very Word of God." [31]

The Gospel of St. John answered those desires. Having portrayed the life of the Word in the bosom of God, his action in the world and his action in souls, John terminated that page, which no other can equal, by the sublime words: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

Behold the Incarnation, behold what Origen styled the divine marriage and the eternal alliance of humanity and of the Word! We have no longer merely the image of God reflected in his visible work, his word in the conscience and in revelation—we possess his presence; and his presence not merely apparent, as Docetism pretended; neither solely ideal, as Platonism dreamed. He was not, furthermore, a purely intelligible being, like the Word of the philosophers, or dwelling solitary and disdainfully in the glorious spheres whither rabbinism and the Alexandrians had banished him.

Primarily, he is *like us*—that is, the Word *made flesh*. St. John does not draw back before the realism of that expression to put an end at once to scholastic quibbles which sustain that the blessed God could not ally himself with matter.[32]

Three centuries later, reunited in the same place where John had written those grand words, the Council of Ephesus commentated it by the following imagery: "The word, the expression, made use of in our language, is a thing neither sensible, visible, nor tangible. But when writing translates it by characters and by letters, we then seize it,

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ου γὰρ ἦν θέμις ὕλης, ψαύειν τὸν μακάριον.—Philo, *de Sacrific.*, xiii.

we perceive it, we touch it. Thus the Word of God, invisible by nature, is rendered visible to man, and the incorporeal being has assumed a body which we have touched." [33]

It was, then, a God made man, and his humanity is no less manifested in the Gospel of St. John than his divinity. He who seats his mother beside himself at the wedding of Cana, and who from the cross bequeaths her to the disciple, is our brother, is a man; he who has an invisible Father of whom he says, "I and my Father are one," is the Word, is God. He whom fatigue constrains to seat himself beside Jacob's well, and who asks for drink, is man; but he who, penetrating the conscience of the guilty woman, tells her the secrets of her life and the thirst of her heart, is the Word, is God. He who is moved to pity and to mercy before the adulterous woman, is man; he who avenges the contempt shown her and absolves her from the crime is the Lord, is God. He who is troubled and weeps at the sepulchre of Lazarus is the loving friend, is man; he who blesses the Father, and commands death to release his prey, is God. He whom treason mortally saddens in the cenacle is man; he who delivers himself up, declaring that his punishment will become his glory, is the Almighty, is God. He who, upon the cross, complains of being forsaken both by heaven and earth, is mortal, is man; he who, embracing with an intrepid glance the past as well as the future, declares that "all is consummated," is truly the Son of God. He who dies and pays that fearful tribute of our fallen condition is man; he who,

[33] Sermo quem proferimus sermo est incorporeus, non aspectui subjectus, non tactu tractabilis. Sed cum sermo induerit litteras et elementa, visib lis fit, aspectu comprehenditur, tactu tractatur. Sic et Verbum Dei, quod naturaliter invisibile est, visibile fit, et quod natura incorporeum est, invenitur esse tractabile.—*Act. Conc. Epheseni*, pars 3, in *Homil. de Nativit.*, ab Theodoto Ancyrano.

having foretold it, resuscitates himself, is God. He who, victor over death, eats with his disciples and makes them touch him, telling them that he is made of flesh and of bones, is man; he who gives to Peter the superhuman power of feeding his sheep, and before whom Thomas falls upon his knees, is God.

Truly God against Gnosticism, truly man against Gnosticism, it seems that, in St. John, Christ is so clearly God that the Evangelist experiences rather the necessity of showing him to be man. He renders the most insistent testimony to the fact that from the foot of his cross he beheld the water and the blood of holy humanity flow from his side. He specially declares to Christians, in his First Epistle, that he has seen, beheld, touched, and handled with his hands the Word of life; and it is when Thomas has placed his hands in the glorious wounds of the holy humanity that he also renders testimony to his divinity: "Thou art my Master and my God!"

But the Word is not merely mind and flesh *like us;* he is likewise *with us*, he dwells among us, and humanity no longer vainly aspires to the happiness of possessing within her ranks that great God craved by a religion too often lost in superstition and in idolatry.

But John says more than that. It is not with us, it is *in us*, that the Word dwells: "*Et habitavit in nobis.*" It is "in us that the Word abides," as St. John again wrote to his disciples of Ephesus. He abides therein by grace and by truth—*plenum gratiæ et veritatis.* Thitherto the world had possessed merely a fugitive spark of truth; there was the focus. Up to that hour men could drink only at the stream of grace; here was the plenitude thereof: *De plenitudine ejus omnes accepimus.*

Finally, the Eucharist finished and fulfilled the sense of that closing word; for it is there that truly and literally the

Word made flesh resides *in us*, according to the term of St. John. It is there that his presence is a reality. It is there that the incarnation of the Word perpetuates, dilates itself, making itself immense and immortal like God, but at the same time making itself individual for man, renewing itself, if I may dare so speak, to be and to act in each separate soul.

By that concludes the sublime exposition of the *Eternal Gospel*, the name which Origen applies to the Book of St. John. No other better merits that appellation. We have seen the prologue transport us to the bosom of Eternity by its opening sentence; and behold, by the closing paragraph it shows us the Lamb of God living and dwelling among us and in us world without end.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DIVINE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST IN ST. JOHN.

I.

IT did not suffice to announce that Jesus Christ was the Word of God; it was requisite that the Gospel be the living proof and the presentation of that divinity. That was for St. John an impossible task, were Jesus but a man; a God is not created, and "the inventor would be more wonderful than the hero." But it was, on the contrary, the simplest of undertakings, were Jesus God; for, to reproduce a divine image, it is necessary merely to have beheld it, to remember it, and to relate.

Has the Gospel fulfilled that promise? Is Jesus Christ therein God? Does he show himself God in his whole person, in word and in life? Did he sustain that character constantly and naturally? And can we find, in his physiognomy reproduced by the Gospel, I do not say the proof, but the very spectacle, of the Divinity?

We must stop to examine if it be thus. We must contemplate in Jesus intelligence, courage, and love. We must consider how, each of these faculties being absolutely perfect and infinite, St. John has been led to conclude that it was the infinitude and the perfection of God.

Firstly, the intelligence of Jesus, in St. John, displays a sovereignty which defies all limits and all comparison with the mind of man.

We possess but contingent intelligence, and John heard the Master style himself essential and *substantial* intelli-

gence: "I *am* the truth."[1] "I *am* the light of the world."[2] "I *am* the beginning."[3]

Whilst the exercise of the intelligence, in us, proceeds in a great measure from human education, Jesus proclaims, in St. John, that his intelligence was from heaven, and that he held it from God: "I speak to you heavenly things; for I am descended from heaven. I speak not of myself, but that which I hear. . . . My doctrine is not mine; it is that of my Father, who sent me. The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him what he himself doth. I speak only what I have received from God. I speak nothing of myself; but as my Father said unto me, so I speak."[4]

Finally, whilst in us all science, even that come from God, is reflected science, in Jesus it is direct. We have its ray, Jesus possesses the focus; we drink at the stream, Jesus is at the fountain. "My judgments are true; because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. I am in the Father, and the Father in me."[5] It is continual, perpetual, intuitive science. "He who sends me dwells within me. He who hath seen me hath seen him who sent me. I and my Father are one."[6]

In fact, hear Jesus Christ, how he speaks! His eloquence is sublime, because its basis is naturally divine. It is the Word of God spread without. Thus you do not find in the words of Jesus the vivid excitement which inspired the prophets with their burning ardor and their bold imagery when the Holy Ghost, raising them upon his wings, transports them into the midst of superhuman visions. Nothing in Jesus bespeaks the momentary exaltation of an exceptional hour; the Spirit of God does not transport him, but it dwells in him; he is not possessed by it, he possesses himself. Brilliancy does not dazzle him;

[1] John xiv. 6. [2] John viii. 12. [3] John viii. 25.
[4] John iii. 12; xii. 49; viii. 28. [5] John viii. 16; x. 38. [6] John xiv. 9.

for he is light. He requires no effort to attain the summit; for it is the abiding-place of his soul, and he dwells in the very bosom of the mystery which he reveals.

Therefore that word is always as simple as it is natural and elevated. "The king's sons," says Bossuet, "born amid grandeur, speak without emphasis of crowns and of sceptres." Jesus does not argue, does not reason, does not perorate. He does not even prove; for to demonstrate itself light needs only to appear. "That is or is not"; behold the whole discourse, such as Jesus willed it. "Verily, verily"—such is the entire argumentation of the Gospel of St. John, and the word is sown, like the grain in the fields, with profusion, for God holds the treasury; with calmness, for he is its master; with simplicity, for he can lower himself without losing aught of his grandeur; finally, with confidence, for he knows the hour and the day of the harvest. He himself once defined eloquence, the flowing of the heart: *Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur.* Was it not here the deep overflow of the very soul of God?

Then our intelligence is limited; John portrays in Jesus Christ *infinite* intelligence. He has profound learning; it penetrates souls: "He needed not that any should give testimony of man: for he knew what was in man."[7] And the woman of Samaria could not sufficiently marvel that his divine glance had pierced her whole life. He has immense science; it penetrates the past: "To him who comes to me I will reveal things hidden from the foundation of the world."[8] It foresees the future: "Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."[9] Then he said again: "Lift up your eyes and see the countries; for they are white

[7] John ii. 25. [8] Matt. xiii. 35. [9] John xii. 31

already to harvest!" He heard the striking of the hour of the general resurrection of nations. He perceived the rising of the dead of all species coming to light. He saw appearing in the distance the new worship in spirit and in truth. Prophet for himself, he sees himself die and fall into the sepulchre as the grain sinks into the earth to become an ear of corn. He said that his blood would be his baptism; that his Passion would be his glory; that his gibbet would be the lever which should move the world; that all should finally be consummated in unity; that then there should be but one flock and one shepherd. All the most miraculous events witnessed for the last eighteen hundred years, all that humanity may borrow of fruitful light from the Gospel until the end of time, Jesus predicted it, and his disciple could render him this testimony: "Lord, thou knowest all things, and thou needest not that any man should ask thee: thou comest forth from God." [10]

It is another weakness of human intelligence to hesitate and to bend; it is a third power of the intelligence of Jesus to know no doubt and to remain *certain* and mistress of herself. That double protestation of Jesus, "Amen, amen, I say unto you"—formula peculiar to the Gospel of St. John—was the affirmation of exact truth which calmly possesses herself, and which says what she sees.

That serene certitude never quits the Master. They dispute his words; he appeals therefrom to his works. They seek to discover his secret: "How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense?" they say to him. "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." [11] But his confidential conversation does not differ from his public preaching. God cannot lay aside his divinity. They dispute it, he sustains it; they deny it, he affirms it. They dare object to him that he

[10] John xvi. 30. [11] John x. 24.

knows not learning; he answers that he is himself the Wisdom of God. They will see in him but the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother are known at Nazareth; he gently asserts that God himself is his Father, and that he comes from God. When his discourse surprises, he is not moved thereat; when his language scandalizes, he does not reform it; when his words seem hard, he does not qualify them; when they quit him because of his doctrine, he pities the dissidents, but he suffers them to depart. The defection of his followers cannot change that which is; and at each fresh astonishment excited by his assertions the Word of life answers by a still more positive affirmation.

If, as it has been defined, eloquence be a virtue, the eloquence of Jesus is divine virtue. Fénelon says of it that whilst the word of man signifies what he has done, the word of God makes itself what it says. It is the creative word by which all things were made, the word of life whereby all subsists. It participates in all the divine attributes—power, goodness, fecundity, simplicity; finally, in immortality—and we shall see heaven and earth pass away ere one tittle perish of all the words fallen from the lips of Jesus.

II.

The courage of Jesus, his indomitable strength, and his grandeur of soul were other virtues no less divine than the former. When do we ever see him draw back in the defence of his faith and of truth? When the Jews ridicule him, and in their disdain recommend that country prophet to return to his province of Galilee, John shows him ascending to the Temple, and upon the terrace of the porches, crowded with people, boldly announce that he is the Christ.[12]

[12] John vii. 28.

They treat him as a blasphemer; John hears him answer: "I glorify my Father, and my Father hath no higher glory than that." They treat him as a breaker of the law of the Sabbath; he answers that he does what he has seen done of his Father, the indefatigable Creator, who has sent him. They demand of him a judgment against a guilty woman; he writes upon the sand the mysterious sentence against her denunciators.

At least they would persuade him to soften his reproaches, to compromise doctrine with the proud, and to respect the persons of the powerful. He regards the humble, he pardons sinners; but he unmasks hypocrites and confounds the haughty, because he is the truth and they are falsehood. St. John remarked it: "They were blind of eye, they were hard of heart, they were cowards who feared the Pharisees; for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God." [13]

But he cares only for the glory of God, and he will sustain it against violence, as he has defended it against contradiction.

They seek his life; he does not ignore it: "You seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you." But can one ever kill the truth? [14]

They send servants to lay hands upon him. He pities these poor people; he tells them he knows the design which brings them; but, far from gainsaying himself, he announces that "soon whither he goes they cannot come." [15] The latter fall under his charm, and he makes disciples of his persecutors.

They plot his death; Jesus goes to meet it. "Rabbi, the Jews of late sought to stone thee," says John, together with the other terrified disciples; "and goest thou thither

[13] John xii. 40–43. [14] John viii. 37. [15] John vii. 34; viii. 21.

again?" He answers, in St. John, that he is the light of the world, and will enlighten it until night come.[16]

That night does not dismay him; for truth will gain thereby a more beautiful dawn. "When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am he."[17]

It is for the truth that St. John has seen him live; it is for the truth that he will see him die. "I came into the world," said the sublime Criminal to the procurator; "I was born to give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."[18]

Finally, when he was breathing his last upon the cross, he sought still, by a final and intrepid glance, to assure himself that all truth had been accomplished. Then "All is consummated," said he, giving up the ghost.

Such John was to see; such was he to relate. Were such strength of character and such magnanimity human gifts? And if the life and the death of Socrates be those of a man, are not the life and the death of Jesus manifestly those a God?

But the love of Jesus, the goodness of Jesus, have attained in the Gospel of John such depths that the divine infinity everywhere shows itself.

It was immense love; and whilst within us, limited in its object, it embraces few persons, the love of Jesus Christ flowed over the "entire world." "Father, I pray not only for these, but for them also who shall through their word believe in me: that they may all be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee: that they may be one, as we also are one."[19]

Then, as if for that great heart one world was not enough to love, one world to bring together in unity,

[16] John xi. 8. [17] John viii. 28. [18] John xviii. 37. [19] John xvii. 20–22.

he turns toward the sheep who are not of that fold, toward other spheres, toward other heavens, as some understand it; and he longs for the day when there shall be but one flock and one shepherd.

It was absolute love, giving itself wholly, without acceptation of persons. Whilst with us the heart seeks but a noble object for its predilection, the predilection of Jesus is for the lowly, the poor, the fallen, and the wretched, leaving the flock in the desert for the wounded sheep, whom he loads upon his shoulders and brings back to the fold. He lived upon earth at a distance from princes and from grandees. He gathered around him the ignorant and sinners. He loved the lowly to the extent of kneeling to wash their feet. There was a woman in Samaria whose soul bent under the weight of sin; Jesus Christ fatigued himself by going to seek her amid her own nation. In Judea a sinful woman had become the sport of the people; Jesus, having pardoned her, led her to his cross, where she so copiously wept that the heavens themselves admired her grief. Finally, he confided his most holy Church to a common fisherman; and, wishing to confer upon him that supreme power, he did not ask him what he had nor what he knew, but he assured himself that that man knew how to love, and that he would know how to die.

Then it is generous and disinterested love. When does he think of himself? He multiplies loaves for the famished crowd; but he himself lives by alms and fasts in the desert. He changes water into wine at the wedding-feast of Cana; but he asks a stranger woman for drink. Whilst all devotedness exacts a return, bestowing itself only at that price, the love of Jesus Christ makes no condition, and he who sells him can become his friend as well as he who slays him. Finally, whilst man loves meanly, narrowly, selfishly, and the best gifts of self are

but half gifts, Jesus bestows his life. It is his life which he gives us superabundantly.[29] St. John has no expression more familiar to Jesus than that.

It was perpetual, unquenchable, immortal love. John so named it: "Having loved his own, who were in the world, Jesus Christ loved them unto the end," said he; and that end was lost in eternity itself, in whose bosom Jesus wished us to be near him.

III.

Love is the most characteristic feature of the Divinity: *Deus caritas est.* Antiquity knew it. When she engraved the name of God upon the frontispiece of her temples, it was the name of goodness which she placed before that of grandeur: *Optimo maximo.* The barbarians themselves did not think otherwise; and if, as the Scythian said to Alexander, to be God is to be good, who showed himself more God than the most good Jesus?

"Represent to yourself," says a writer, "the most perfect vital harmony ever placed at the service of the greatest soul, the most generous heart, and the most vigorous courage. Represent to yourself that heroic and sacred life, always actuated by inspiration, ever ready for death, ever recollected in peace, strengthened in certitude and in royal serenity, in that plenitude of joy procured by union with God, and with the whole universe, and with all minds in God. . . . Picture to yourself all those splendid forces assembled and arranged; that abridgment of the universe, that universal life constantly governed in Jesus by love and by goodness. Represent to yourself Jesus in company with poor men crazed with grief, with poor

[29] John x. 10.

suffering bodies, with poor broken hearts, and with poor enchained, possessed, and enslaved minds."[21]

It is in that perfection and sovereign beauty that John had daily beheld him raising his eyes to heaven, invoking God in irresistible prayer, laying his sacred hands upon the heads of the sick who demanded it with faith, shedding loving tears over the grave of a friend, and from his soul and from his hand pouring torrents of grace over the bodies and the souls of those beloved beings. He had beheld him with a tranquil motion of his hand ruling nature, enlightening his word by the truth of his gesture, by the movement of his lips, by the accent of his voice, by the brightness of his face. He had read in that glance of which the Gospel speaks, one of which sufficed to conquer an apostle, to transform a man, to ravish souls for ever. It was a new eloquence, a fresh revelation of his divinity, the fullest manifestation of his glory. "We saw him," said St. John; and seeing him was not merely seeing a man—they were "in fellowship with the Father and with the Son." They were with God as really as we will be so in heaven.

Such is the portrait which John has traced of his Master. I cite nothing which he has not said; he wrote nothing which he had not seen. It is the irremediable infirmity of humanity that all grandeur, approached too closely, loses its prestige. Three years at least passed in familiarity with the soul of Jesus had but increased the splendor of her divine beauty in the eyes of the disciple. "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" said the Just Man.[22]

For eighteen hundred years the Gospel has unceasingly given the same challenge to the world. Has the world contradicted it? Have ages found the slightest obscurity in that intelligence, the least wavering in that strength of

[21] See P. Gratry, *Sophists and Criticism*, p. 362 et seq. [22] John viii. 46.

character, a shadow in that love? Has any image eclipsed that? Has any even pretended to equal it? Has the Gospel of the Word made flesh fulfilled its promise? How could it have done so had the model not posed before it? Is it thus that men invent? Would that not be the greatest of marvels?

Let us hasten to conclude that John has depicted what he saw; but he beheld the Word of life, as he said, and he who had so lately dwelt in close intimacy with a man, "the greatest amongst the children of men," was forced to avow that his new Master was a greater master, and that he had passed to the school of a God.

"Shall I own in concluding," says a delicate mind, "when, in the train of the best amongst the philosophers, I have traversed all that tissue of doctrines, that on leaving that noise and dust I feel sad and discouraged? . . . Wearied and cast down, like a man affected by a painful dream, I open the Gospel. I seem to quit the empire of shadows to enter into the kingdom of truth. That familiar language which charmed my childhood astonishes me by its depth. I see and feel therein a learning which far surpasses all human conceptions. After eighteen centuries the wisdom of the age brings us back to the doubts of an expiring world; after ten centuries Christ speaks to us of God, of our soul, of salvation, of liberty, of duty, of justice, and of truth, as if he had just heard our pleading voice, as if he answered the cry of our troubled soul. . . . Take up the Gospel and read at random a discourse of Christ; dare place beside Spinosa or Hegel the gentle and serene figure of Jesus! Where is the ideal of the Beautiful, the True, and the Good? Where is the doctrine which can charm the greatest minds and console the weakest? Where do we find the rule of morality for man, the rule of duty and of justice for the citizen? Where

is life, where is hope? Once again, forget your church or your sect, and examine coolly.

"The systems of Spinosa have not survived their master. That of Hegel is dead and ruined, like all human works. One sole philosophy is standing. Eighteen centuries have so slightly impaired it that scarcely does humanity begin to understand it; it is the doctrine of Him who alone could say to men: 'If you continue in my word, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' (John viii. 32)."[23]

[23] Laboulaye, *Moral and Political Essays*, p. 56.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN—PREFACE TO HIS GOSPEL—THE LAW OF CHARITY.

I.

THE Gospel being written, it was necessary to make it known to the Christian churches.

St. John said later in his Apocalypse: "I saw an angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal Gospel, to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people: saying with a loud voice: Fear the Lord, and give him honor, because the hour of his judgment is come: and adore ye him, that made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters." [1]

The Gospel of John was soon to have that universal divulgation in the world.

The Apostle provided for that firstly in addressing it himself to the faithful of Asia. He wrote a letter announcing to Christians the book which he had just completed, and the principal points of doctrine and of morality which were its object. That is the subject of the first of the three Epistles of St. John.

Addressed collectively to the Christian communities of Asia, the Epistle bore neither special superscription nor salutation to any one of them. He who wrote it does not even name himself; it was superfluous, since it was

[1] Apoc. xiv. 6, 7.

but the preface of his book, and St. John had named himself in the Gospel.

The title of Epistle to the Parthians, attributed to it in the time of St. Augustine, very probably arose from no other reason save a wrongly-understood abbreviation of a Greek word. It is the Epistle, not "to the Parthians," but "to virgins," that it should be read; and that title of the ancient text, very characteristic in the tongue of St. John, applied to the totality of churches remaining pure from the contagion of error and of iniquity.[2]

The first words of the Epistle, "That which was from the beginning, the Word of life, we declare unto you," related to these: "In the beginning was the Word," and the opening of the letter recalled, in similar terms, the prologue of the Gospel. It thus guaranteed its veracity and authenticity, alleging the authority of an eye-witness. St. John, therefore, wrote: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.

"For the life was manifested: and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal, which was with the Father, and hath appeared unto us:

"That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."[3]

A little further the same character of witness is no less strongly put forward in these words: "This declara-

[2] Clement of Alexandria (*Adumbr. in II. Joan.* t. ii. p. 1011) writes: "Secunda Joannis Epistola ad virgines (Παρθένους) scripta est." The First Epistle probably bore a similar title. Several manuscripts exist wherein the Second Epistle bears as superscription or as signature: Πρὸς Πάρθους. See Hug. *Einleit.*, ii. p. 253, and Valroger, t. ii. p. 401.

[3] 1 John i. 1–3.

tion which we declare unto you we have from Jesus Christ." [4]

That was the good news; and, explaining it in that sense, he adds that that announcement was to fulfil all the desires of his well-beloved sons: "And these things we write unto you, that you may rejoice, and your joy may be full." [5] Had not St. John obeyed their wishes? Had they not entreated him to write the Gospel?

Finally, as the Gospel presented the collective and unanimous testimony of the disciples contemporary with the holy Evangelist, the alternative employment of the singular and of the plural number, denoting the witnesses, likewise recalled in the Epistle both the concert of the brethren and the individual work of the sacred author.

Furthermore, the same style, the same language, a similar basis of thought, similar choice of expressions, in the book and in the letter. The latter shows itself in every point the harmonious peristyle of the temple of the Gospel. The portico and the temple are of the same architecture, because they are by the same hand and of the same date.

It remains now to examine under what circumstances and against what negations that book was written. "These things have I written to you, concerning them that seduce you," [6] said the Apostle in the outset, indicating the militant and apologetic character of the fourth Gospel.

Then to these seducers he gave their generic name of Antichrists, or of enemies of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God: "You have heard that Antichrist cometh: even now there are many Antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last hour. He is Antichrist who denieth the Father and the Son; for whosoever denieth the Son, the same

[4] 1 John i. 5. [5] 1 John i. 4. [6] 1 John ii. 26.

hath not the Father; and he that confesseth the Son, hath the Father also."[7]

Now, who, then, denied the Son and his divinity, save the Corinthians and their impious sects? Who, then, denied Jesus Christ in the truth of his flesh but the partisans of dualist Docetism? Who *divided* Jesus Christ, as St. John expresses it, if not those who, making two parts in the Man-God, took his divinity without his humanity, as the Docetes pretended, or took his humanity without his divinity, as did the Gnostics? Who were the false prophets and the spirits in whom they were not to believe, save the charlatans of virtues and of miracles, such as Apollonius or Simon Magus? St. John clearly denounces them; their names merely are wanting:

"Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

"By this is the Spirit of God known. Every spirit, which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God:

"And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God: and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh, and he is now already in the world.

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome him. Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."[8]

II.

John addresses his letter particularly to the nation of Christians, whom he carefully distinguishes from the infidel crowd, and whose holy prerogatives in the kingdom of God he establishes.

[7] 1 John ii. 18, 22, 23.

[8] 1 John iv. 1–4.

"I write unto you because you have known Him who is from the beginning," said the Apostle to those whom he styles the fathers. "I write unto you, babes, because you have known the Father. I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you. You know all things," said John a little after, "and you have no need that any man teach you." [9]

This is not to say that we should consider the Gospel of St. John as the text of a teaching exclusively reserved to fastidious minds, and that Jesus had two different doctrines, one for the crowd, the other for cultivated souls, forming the patriciate of idea or of faith. But "the spiritual Gospel," in order to be understood, demanded elevated souls; and therefore he addresses it to Christian souls. It requires to be "born of God," as himself explains it, to enter into the divine mystery of the Gospel.

The expression which St. John employed to signify that initiation, that divine regeneration, was *unction*, *chrisma*. "As for you, let the unction, which you have received from him, abide in you. You have received the unction from the Holy One, and know all things." [10] An exterior unction, in fact, consecrated the Christian in baptism. But that was but the emblem of a spiritual unction, far otherwise profound, which was to become the sign of the new nation. The fragrant perfumes which the Asiatics showered upon themselves; the oil which athletes rubbed upon their limbs; that which lent men its brightness during the night; the anointing of prophets, of priests, and of kings; beauty, strength, gentleness, consecration, and light, were all contained in that rich image.

But especially it recalled, in its very root, the sacred name of Christ. It was Christianity herself, in the historic and etymologic sense, which received that deposit of the

[9] 1 John ii. 13, 14, 27. [10] 1 John ii. 20, 27.

Gospel of St. John, with the double precept of keeping it in her heart and of disseminating it throughout the world.

The dispositions required by the Gospel was the object of another admirable instruction of the Epistle of St. John.

"Woe," says Bossuet, "to the sterile knowledge which does not turn to love, and which betrays itself!" That misfortune was precisely that of the gnosis. The gnosis was science, as its name indicates—transcendent science, as she pretended. But science was everything in her eyes; the rest was nothing. To know was supreme good, to ignore was evil; and if there were then fanatics who carried abomination to the extent of styling themselves *Ophites*, or disciples of the serpent, it was because in the serpent they venerated him who first taught man to gather the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

John by one word overthrew that haughty wisdom. His Epistle declared that light was not solely in the mind, but that the focus was principally in the heart. "He that loveth not abideth not in the light, and he knoweth not God: for God is charity."[11]

That love, that desire, that good-will, were, according to St. John, the first disposition of whosoever would arrive at pure truth; so that faith was an affair of the soul no less than of reason. Thus was condemned that *dry light* which Bacon proclaims *to be vain*. Thus also was laid down the complete method of attaining to truth, comprising equally what we now style logic and mysticism, the reason and the heart; one directing the aim, the other winging its flight into the infinite truth and the charity of God.

[11] 1 John iv. 8.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

III.

The Epistle next exposed the virtues which the Gospel was to produce in the world; for the Gospel was not merely a faith, it was a law.

It was a *religious* law, attaching man to God by the tie of love and by that of grace. St. John had already pointed out that benefit of the Incarnation in the prologue of the Gospel when he wrote: "To all those who received the Word, he gave them power to be made sons of God." But the Epistle developed the conditions and the price of that filiation.

To be sons of God we must first love him. "Let us therefore love God," said St. John, "because God hath loved us." [12] Then, to love him truly and efficaciously, we must resemble him; for how could we love him if we did not imitate? We must, then, be holy, "as God is holy." [13] That is what St. John calls "to live in God, to be born of God, to cause God to dwell within us, to have the Spirit of God, to be animated by him." "Behold," he exclaims, "what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the Sons of God." [14]

Thus a divine race was born in baptism which was to bear all the features of its Father; and if the divine presence and the grace of Jesus Christ is capable of producing already here below that transformation and that resemblance, what will it not do when we shall have its full possession and its manifest vision in heaven! "Dearly beloved, we are now the Sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is." [15]

Secondly, the Gospel was the *moral* law, the law of holi-

[12] 1 John iv. 19. [13] 1 John iii. 3. [14] 1 John iii. 1. [15] 1 John iii. 2.

ness; and St. John likewise explained it in his Epistle: "My little children, these things I write to you that you sin not. . . . You know that whosoever is born of God committeth not sin. . . . By this we know that we have known God, if we keep his commandments. He who saith that he knoweth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."[16] "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. He who is born of God sinneth not, because he is the Son of God." However, John well knew that grace was not impeccability, and his letter explained that the Gospel of justice was also that of mercy. "I write you this that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just: and he is the propitiation for our sins."[17]

Finally, the divine Gospel was not solely the holy moral law which affected consciences, the holy religious law which concerned heaven; it was the *social* law which was to govern the earth, and the love of man for man did not separate itself from his love for God. Or rather, it was one and the same love; and John did not merely exalt duty toward our brethren—he deified it. He taught us how, when we shall love men who dwell near us, it will be the invisible God whom we will love in them; man is substituted for the person of God in that unique love which embraces the creature with the Creator.

"If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar," said the great Apostle.

"This commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother."

"For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?"[18]

[16] 1 John ii. 1–4. [17] 1 John ii. 1, 2. [18] 1 John iv. 20, 21.

But John showed that God was accessible in man; that man reciprocally, vile as he may be, was lovable in God. The invisible had thus its worship in the visible; eternal beauty might be served in the unsightliness of our woes; divine opulence was pleased to be succored in human indigence; sovereign grandeur covered with its majesty all our infirmities. One sole law ruled all spiritual being, from God to us, as one same attraction governed all bodies, from the star to the atom; it was the law of charity, whereof God was the centre—*Deus caritas est;* and if the sign of God be the sign of unity, there was no law more manifestly divine.

"My little children," wrote the Apostle of Ephesus, "let us love not in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." [19] Such is the measure of charity: it is to have none.

After the example of God, behold men are to love one another in life and unto death.

Here is the Gospel: "This is the declaration which you have heard from the beginning, that you should love one another."

Here is light: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light."

Here is justice: "Whosoever is not just, is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother."

Here is life: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."

Then, finishing the eulogy of the intrepid virtue: "Fear is not in charity: but perfect charity casteth out fear. And he that feareth, is not perfected in charity." [20]

[19] 1 John iii. 16–18. [20] 1 John iv. 18.

Such is the moral law, such is the law of holiness, such is the law of love. It is the law of progress, it is the law of the future. It will soon be two thousand years since the Epistle of John drew up the formula thereof; and scarcely have men and the world deduced its first consequences. However, those essays, incomplete as they be, have made us what we are.

Now finish the rest. Ask of that law all that it can give. Place it in hearts, engraft it upon morals, insert it in codes and in constitutions; do not, above all, mutilate it by denaturalizing it; do not separate from each other charity towards men and love towards God; do not preach a sterile human fraternity whilst too greatly disregarding divine paternity, which is the trunk of the tree of life. Do not isolate at pleasure the law of religion and the law of society. But allow union to spread itself amongst all souls. Suffer celestial harmony to pervade all spheres; prepare the advent of that saintly race, of that dynasty of the elect, of whom Jesus Christ is the Father; then, all being submitted to that spiritual gravitation upon earth, behold the earth moving toward the heavens; behold peace, joy, society of minds, the family of souls, turning towards salvation instead of destruction, and endeavor to divine what will be the final consequence, in the united and transformed world, of the principle of love whereof St. John is the Apostle, and of which God is the term. . . . *Nondum apparuit.* St. John himself declares that we know it not.

CHAPTER XIX.

ST. JOHN AT THE LATIN GATE.

I.

MEANWHILE, St. John was approaching old age, and he did not escape the greatest sorrow of those whom God condemns to live—that of seeing all his dear ones disappear around him, and of remaining the last of his age to bear it witness and remembrance.

St. Paul, captive at Rome, had ended thither his course, begun thirty years previously upon the road to Damascus—*Cursum consummavi.* Peter had embraced him upon the road to punishment, and himself had had, the same day, the honor of ascending the cross of his Master, on the summit of a hill whence he had blessed the city and the universe. It was likewise in the arms of a cross that Andrew had slept in death, as became the brother of the Prince of the Apostles. After James the Great, after James the Just, Simeon had offered at Jerusalem the pure sacrifice of his blood. Thomas had ended his career in the Indies after having carried further than all the others that faith in Jesus which, more than the rest, he had been slow to believe. Nearer John, in Phrygia, at Hieropolis, in the very midst of that Asia governed by our Apostle, Philip had endured glorious martyrdom. Thus the brethren had all fallen in turn, and the Lord of heaven had almost entirely re-gathered in his bosom that family of the cenacle of which he said: "Father, I thank thee that of those whom thou gavest me, I have lost none."

One alone yet remained. Seeing his existence thus prolonged, the disciples might well believe that he was not to die, and the report went forth amongst them, as he says.[1] The apostle had lived so long merely to be witness of a final disaster more inconsolable than the others. Jerusalem was no more. After desolations at which history marvels, Vespasian and Titus had raised their tents upon the very hill whereon the disciple had one day beheld his Master weep over the guilty city which slew the prophets. The city was in ruins, the Temple reduced to ashes; and those who could flee before these days of murder and incendiarism, dispersed throughout the world, had taught John that all was finished with the places whither he had dwelt near God and his Mother.

His heart was deeply wounded thereat. Although we are of the country of heaven, the love of our terrestrial land is a sentiment too noble to be unworthy of saintly souls. John, therefore, remembered the tears which his Master had shed over the woes formerly predicted by him, and but now too certain.[2] He might weep also; and the further he advanced in suffering and in life, the better he understood the sorrowful sense of the word which the Lord Jesus had pronounced regarding him: "What if I will that that disciple remain till I come?"

One instant he might fancy his hour to be at hand. Domitian was upon the throne. That prince, whom Tertullian styles "the other half of Nero"—*portio Neronis*—was cowardly no less than ferocious. His cruel policy, as Suetonius designates it—*callida sævitia*—was alarmed at the progress of that invading sect, which threatened to be-

[1] John xxi. 23.

[2] St. John does not refer in his Gospel to the prophecy of the Lord upon the ruin of Jerusalem. St. Chrysostom gives a delicate reason: "Having written after the ruin of the holy city, had John recalled his Master's prediction, he might have been accused of having invented it after its fulfilment."

come mistress of all things. Under Claudius it had merely been an affair of police, of which the emperor freed himself by banishing its members from Rome. Under Nero it was already a source of peril for the state. They were no longer slaves, the unlearned and the miserable, who, according to the expression of Tacitus and of Suetonius, made themselves the instigators of that novelty. They were patricians, philosophers, and senators. There were amongst these latter Pudens with his family, and possibly Thraseas, Pætus Bareas, and Soranus, virtuous souls over whom hovers that noble suspicion. There was Proculus, one of the household of the emperor, converted by St. Paul. There was undoubtedly also Pomponia Græcina, wife to Plautius—"that venerable matron who was judged and acquitted by a family tribunal upon an accusation of a foreign religion."[3] There was Servilla, daughter of Bareas, suspected of magic, as were all Christians. And was there not likewise the Empress Poppea, murdered by Nero, her husband, whom Baronius makes a disciple of St. Paul?

But under the reign of Domitian faith overflowed at Rome. Religion no longer sat upon the steps of the throne; she was prepared to mount thereon. "This fact is incontestable and curious," remarks a historian. The Flavian house, which had terminated civil wars, and bestowed twelve years of peace upon the world ere giving it Domitian, had received these temporal benedictions merely because she possessed the righteous within her bosom. In the days of Nero there was a Flavia Plautilla, daughter of Flavius Sabinus, niece to Vespasian, and cousin-

[3] M. de Champagny, *The Antonines*, t. i. p. 146. Upon Pomponia Græcina and her husband, Aulus Plautius, conqueror of Britain under Claudius, see Tacitus (*Annal.* xiii. xxxii.) The change of life of Pomponia Græcina dates from the year 43—that of the arrival of St. Peter at Rome; her trial by her relatives in the year 53; her death in the year 83 (Tacitus, *ibid.*, and Dio. Cass. lx. p. 667).

german to Domitian, who formerly, a weeping spectator of the martyrdom of St. Paul, had loaned him her veil to bandage his eyes. The Apostle had promised her to return it shortly; and, in fact, angels brought it all bloody to Plautilla, announcing to her that she should quickly follow Paul. She died the following year.[4]

Plautilla, in expiring, left Christianity in her house. Her brother, Titus Flavius Clemens, was a Christian; and when he espoused his cousin Flavia Domitilla, he found her, or he rendered her, a Christian likewise.[5] Plautilla, furthermore, left a daughter, named also Flavia Domitilla, too young to have been instructed in the faith by her mother. But two faithful servants, Nereus and Achilles, watched over that youthful soul. Some years after the death of her mother Flavia was ready for marriage; she was about to espouse Aurelian, son of the Consul Aurelius Flavius. She was entirely occupied with the preparations of her nuptial toilet and with the thought of the desired hymen. "Flavia," said her two servants, "do you realize what sorrows are reserved to you in that pagan marriage? Do you understand the joy and the glory of holy virginity? Do you know the celestial Spouse who claims you?". They taught her the honor of Christian purity. Flavia was seized with admiration for so noble a doctrine; she demanded baptism, she received from the Pontiff Clement the consecration of the virgins of God, and she held herself ready for martyrdom.[6]

[4] May 20, 68. See acts of Sts. Domitilla, Nereus, and Achilles, apud Bolland. et Martyrol., Rom., May 12; and the excellent observations of the Abbé Greppo, *Christians of the Family of Domitian*, in his *Memoirs upon Ecclesiastical History*, Paris, 1848.

[5] The Christianity of Clement and of Flavia, his wife, could not be doubted after what Dion Cassius (lxvii. xviii.) and Brutius Præsens (apud Eusebius iii. xviii.), pagan writers, say of their sufferings under Domitian. See furthermore Eusebius himself and St. Jerome.

[6] See the same *Acts*. In consequence of a confusion of names, they make Pope St. Clement uncle to Flavia Domitilla.

Behold, therefore, four Christians in the imperial family: Plautilla, her daughter, her brother, and her sister-in-law, all near relatives of Domitian. These Christians for some time enjoyed the good graces of the emperor. Although the Christian humility of Clemens passed in the eyes of pagans for *inertness*, Domitian had just named him consul, *ordinary* consul, and consul with the emperor, which was a triple honor. Finally, Domitian had almost adopted his two young sons, whom he had designated as his heirs, and to whom he had given the names of Vespasian and Domitian.[7]

Should Domitian expire, these two sons of a Christian, these scholars of Quintillian, these disciples of the Gospel, would attain the throne, to which they are heirs; and scarcely sixty years after the shameful death of him who was named *Chrestus*, as Suetonius styled him, during the lifetime of his last-surviving Apostle and of his friend, his worship was about to arrive without shock, by the right of legitimate hereditary succession, at the empire of the world; and possibly St. John was about to be solemnly summoned to preach and celebrate, in presence of the Cæsars, upon the tomb of St. Peter.

Hell must have shuddered at a similar danger. Domitian discovered it; blood flowed. The Consul Flavius Clemens, his near relative, was beheaded, as being convicted, reports Dion Cassius, "of a species of impiety peculiar to the Jews." Flavia Domitilla, niece to the emperor, was banished to a distance; the young princes disappeared. All that was Jewish, or which seemed to be, relates Suetonius, became the object of bitter persecution. We know that by that name, amid the authors of the time, we must especially understand the Christians.[8]

[7] See Quintil. iii. vii., iv. præfat. x. 1; for the names of those young princes see the medals.

[8] About a century since a leaden box was discovered at Rome, containing

A purely fiscal idea of the emperor was the first origin of that persecution. Vespasian, his father, having conquered the Jews, had constrained them to transfer to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus the tribute of two drachmæ, formerly levied for their Temple. As avaricious as cruel, Domitian extended that tax to the Christians. Were not they Jews in his eyes—those men who, not adoring the gods, had a worship of their own, celebrated a Sabbath, and kneeled before a Galilean God? They were first ruined by exactions; and Suetonius, who does not yet know their new name, indicates, however, that there was here not merely question of the people of Israel. "Besides those of that religion," says he, "there were others who, without publicly professing themselves such, led a similar life, and who yet denied being sons of that race."

The capitation imposed by Vespasian was to assure to the Jews their liberty of worship. The Christians paid it, but were none the more free thereby. The emperor was uneasy.[9] Already, according to the contemporary account of Hegesippus, related by Eusebius, he had summoned before him two poor Christians of Judea, grandsons of the Apostle St. Jude, and the last descendants of the family of Jesus and of the Virgin Mary. He who had wished that Rome had but one single head, to strike it off at a blow, had the policy of ruining parties by attacking their chiefs. But when, having demanded of these Israelites what were their resources, the latter had answered him that they possessed between them but nine thousand denarii of silver

fragments of bones, ashes impregnated with blood, and a vase of glass broken. Upon the marble covering the box were the words, *Flavius Clemens, Martyr.* See Mamachi, t. i. p. 354; Zacharias, *Hist. Littér.* p. 235. The inscription is certainly not contemporary; but it argues great antiquity. Upon the confusion of Jews and of Christians see Suetonius, *in Claud.* xxv.; Sulpic. Sever. *Hist.* ii. xcix.; Arrian. ex Epictet. ii. x.; Spartian, *in Caracall.* i.; Cels., apud Origen. iii. 6, 7; Tertull. *Apolog.* xxi.

[9] Εφοβεῖτο γὰρ τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.—Euseb. iii. xx.

and thirty-nine plethra of ground,[10] for which they paid tax; that that revenue being insufficient for their maintenance, they worked for their livelihood; and that these sons of David had shown him their hands, seamed with toil; when, questioned upon the reign of Christ, their divine relative, they answered that his kingdom was not of this world, and that Jesus would only inaugurate it the day whereon he should return upon earth to judge the living and the dead, Domitian merely laughed at it.[11] What likelihood was there that the promises of the Sibylline books could apply to that dynasty of wretched cultivators? The sect had other chiefs; and learning that the last and the dearest disciple of Jesus was in fact still living at Ephesus, Domitian gave orders that St. John should be brought to him.

II.

I had at first paid absolutely no attention to the correspondence which prochorus supposes between the Emperor Domitian and the proconsul of Asia upon the subject of St. John. Recent discoveries have proven that at least these latter had enjoyed true credit during the Middle Ages. About four years since, works executed in the noble and ancient capitular hall of the Abbey of Westminster brought to light, besides damaged frescoes, a Latin inscription which excited public opinion and offered a wide field of researches and conjectures to the learned world of England. That document, whose origin seems to have escaped the investigation of English antiquaries, is nothing more than a passage from the manuscript of Patmos; such, fur-

[10] Nine thousand denarii, about eighteen hundred dollars; thirty-nine plethra, about eight English acres.

[11] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii. xx.; Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, i. ccxii.

thermore, as it is actually to be found in the library of the British Museum. Thus wrote the proconsul to Domitian touching the great Apostle:

"To the most pious Cæsar Domitian, ever Augustus, the Proconsul of Ephesus, greeting:

"We make known to your glory that a man named John, of the race of the Jews, has come into Asia, where he preaches the crucified Jesus, affirming the latter to be God and the Son of God. Through him the worship of our invincible gods is forsaken, and the venerable temples built by your predecessors are menaced with approaching ruin. That man succeeds by his preaching and by his illusive magic in converting the people of Ephesus to the worship of a dead Man who was nailed to a cross. We ourselves, full of zeal for our immortal gods, have summoned that impious wretch before our tribunal, engaging him by caresses and threats to abjure his Christ, and to offer agreeable libations to the all powerful gods of the empire. Unable to succeed in persuading him so to do, we have addressed these letters to your power, in order that it may please you to make known to us that which will be most pleasing to your Majesty."[19]

[19] Pissimo Cæsari et semper Augusto Domitiano, proconsul Ephesiorum, salutem: Notificamus gloriæ vestræ, quoniam quidam vir, nomine Joannes, e gente Hebræorum, in Asiam veniens et prædicans Jesum crucifixum, affirmavit eum verum Deum et Dei Filium esse, cultumque autem in victissimorum Deorum nostrorum evacuat, et templa venerandæ ab antecessoribus vestris constructa funditus everterc festinat. Contractus itaque hic existens, ut magnus et sacrilegus vestro imperiali decreto, suis magicis artibus et [prædicationibus] omnem pene populum urbis Ephesinæ ad cultum hominis crucifixi et mortui convertit. Nos autem [zelum habentes ergo culturam immortalium Deorum] cum tribunalibus nostris præsentatum comitatibus, blanditiis et [terroribus juxta imperiale edictum admonuimus ut suum Christum] abnegaret, atque diis omnipotentibus grata libamina offerret. Cui cum nulla ratione ista persuadere potuissemus, hoc apices vestræ potestati dirigimus, ut quicquid majestati vestræ placuerit de eo fieri notificetis. See the letter of Rev. Chas. Wordsworth to the editor of the London *Times*, May 15, 1865.

What follows is but the account of the martyrdom of St. John at the Latin Gate, and of his banishment to the island of Patmos, such again as we find it in the same manuscript. Must we attribute some authenticity to that proconsular letter? Has its existence at least, if not its actual form, some guarantee in the history of that time; or is it merely an imitation of the very well known letter which, about the same time, Pliny the Younger addressed to the Emperor Trajan upon the alarming progress of the religion of Christ amongst the nations of Bithynia? However it may be with regard to that text, it is attested by all historians that John was brought to Rome, laden with chains, along that glorious route over which one of his children, Ignatius the Martyr, was so quickly to follow his footprints.

The entrance of St. John into Rome in the year 95, upon the extreme confines of the apostolic century of which he was the last and august remains, is certainly one of the most considerable facts of the history of that age. It was the consecration of that supreme grandeur of the Roman Church already cemented, twenty-eight years previously, by the glorious blood of St. Peter and of St. Paul, the beloved brethren with whom St. John had first shared the apostolate, and with whom he hoped shortly to share the tomb.

At that time especially he found Rome filled with Jews. Implanted in that city nearly two centuries before, the Jewish colony had overflowed all the suburban regions, where it had subdivided into various tribes, whose names have been handed down to us.[13]

There were the *Campenses*, probably dwelling in the Campus Martius, the *Augustenses*, *Agrippenses*, *Suburenses*, *Volumnenses*, *Elæenses*, *Calcarienses*, and the *Hebræi*, pro-

[13] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xvii. 12. See the Abbé Cruice, *Essay upon the Philosophoumena*, p. 338.

perly so called. We find them then what they have been since: some more wealthy, living not far from the Porta Capena, in the famous valley where Numa listened to the lessons of the nymph Egeria, and wherein the Muses had a beautiful marble temple with a sacred grove; the others, wretched mendicants, having no resource save a basket and the straw upon which they slept at night, in the deserted spots of the Trastiberine region. Their catacombs, discovered in our own day, give us some idea of their stormy existence, as well as of the difference of their doctrines and customs. Those of the Trastiberina, Greeks in language, in manners, and in tastes, had a deadly tendency towards Philoism, whilst haughty Phariseeism reigned amid the colony of the Porta Capena. But at that time oppression equalized them all before the biting sarcasms of Martial or of Statius, as under the yoke of Domitian; and John could behold everywhere the image of the enslavement of his cherished country. In the centre of the city his eyes were offended by the sight of the triumphal arch of Titus, under which it is said the descendants of the Jews still refuse to pass even at this distant day. Quite near to that he might view the Flavian Amphitheatre, wherein his conquered brethren labored in chains, and wherein his brothers in the Gospel were soon to descend to testify and to die.

It was the latter, however, who were destined to console him for the irremediable ruin of the Jewish land by displaying to him the young, grand Christian country more prosperous than ever. How eagerly must he have offered the holy kiss of Christ to those sons of the new Rome, transformed by them, and thenceforth immortal!

At their head was their bishop, Clement, who was said to be of senatorial race. He had followed Paul in his wanderings. Peter had then bequeathed to him the care of his flock; John himself had probably seen him at Sar-

dis; it was therefore a brother whom he recognized in him. But Clement had returned to Rome, his native city, and no one was better prepared than that sage to combat the various philosophical sects which he had so thoroughly studied. If the *Recognitions* attributed to him are really from his pen, it was the noble care for immortality which had brought him to Christianity. "I was beaten about from doctrine to doctrine," melancholily observed the young Roman, "more unhappy than ever, as if carried off in a whirlwind of contradictory ideas, and I sighed in the very depths of my soul."[14] I know not if the avowals which anxiety concerning the next life has often drawn from souls in our own day attain in the slightest degree to the majesty of the affecting pages wherein the author of that book relates similar torments, the powerlessness of the schools to resolve the problem, and, finally, his happiness and his peace assured when one day comes a Jew named Barnabas, who announces Jesus Christ and the way of heaven. At least it is certain, as St. Irenæus tells us, that, a disciple of the holy Apostles, "he heard unceasingly resound in his ears the words of his masters, as he had ever their examples before his eyes."[15]

Around him, as from a centre, shone the greatest souls of that place as well as of that age. According to the opinion of Origen and of Eusebius, first came Hermas, who, that same year, had just drawn up those *Visions of the Pastor*, a copy whereof had been addressed to Clement by order of the Lord Jesus. "No writing of that time," says an author, "better represents to us the loving, artless, even poetic character of a still youthful Christian community which peril, by forcing it to fall back upon itself, rendered

[14] *Recognitions*, c. i. Edit. Cotellier.

[15] S. Irenæus in Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* v. vi.) Clement of Alexandria gives him the name of Apostle: Ὁ ἀπόστολος Κλήμης.—*Stromat.* iv. xvii.

purer and more interior. It was not yet the day of great geniuses and of great doctors; it was the age of pure imaginations and of candid souls." [16]

The entire Church of Rome breathes throughout the books of Hermas and of Clement. The spirit of purity, of concord, and of pardon; the charity, the grace, and the unction of Jesus Christ, the strength of martyrs, the continence of virgins, put forth all their fragrance. We realize that we are near the divine fountain, and that John is not far distant.

What literature after that of Statius, of Juvenal, and of Petronius! Yet it is, however, the same century. Whilst Statius celebrated the lion of Domitian or the locks of Erinus, Hermas, near by, on the road to Campania, received in his house the visit of the pastor who dictated to him the austere hymns of holiness and of charity.[17] Whilst Juvenal agreeably ridiculed the turbot of the emperor, the Pontiff Clement traced, in his letter to the Church of Corinth, an ideal of beauty and of moral grandeur which left far behind the dreams of all poets and of all historians. It was the same year in which John entered Rome that that admirable epistle went forth to convey peace to the divided Corinthians. Those who are named therein—Claudius, Ephebus, Valerian, Vito, and Fortunatus—could witness the martyrdom of the Apostle. There was likewise that saintly woman Grapta, who was charged to teach the divine

[16] De Champagny, *the Antonines*, t. i. ch. i. p. 135. The book of the *Pastor* is attributed to Hermas, contemporary of St. Paul (Rom. xvi. 14) and of Pope St. Clement, by Origen (x. *in Rom.* xvi. 14, etc.); by Eusebius (*Hist.* iii. 3); by St. Jerome (*de Viris Illustrib.* x.) On the other hand, Tertullian (*Contra Marcion.* iii. 9) and the fragment published by Muratori attribute it to another Hermas, brother to Pope Pius I.

[17] "As I prayed in my house, lying upon my bed, there entered a man of venerable aspect, clad as a shepherd, having a cloak of white sheepskin, bearing a wallet on his shoulder, and holding a staff in his hand. He saluted me. . . . 'Dost thou not know me?' said he. 'I am the pastor to whom thou hast been confided.'"

Scriptures to widows and to children.[18] The illustrious females Dania and Dirce had been the first to endure the torments of the persecution, and had preceded St. John. Clement himself, in his letter to the Corinthians, relates their sufferings. Hermas had given him warning thereof; the angel had said to him: "Behold, a great tribulation approacheth. Happy those who shall persevere and shall not deny their own life! The Lord hath sworn by his Son, 'Whosoever shall deny his Son, shall be for ever deprived of eternal life.'" [19]

Thus the army of the saints were in battle array, mutilated but invincible, when its chief appeared, the last remaining veteran of the apostolic troop, who came to animate it to new combats. It was the struggle of right against oppression, and of liberty against iniquity. "Those Christians," remarks a recent historian, "old men, children, young women and maidens, who were about to fall under the teeth of lions, were the only human creatures throughout the empire who resisted a tyranny before which all bowed. They did not conspire; they allowed those masters of the world, who were likewise its shame, to be stricken down by the hands of their soldiers and their freedmen; or at least, if they conspired, it was not in slaying, but in dying—*non occidendo, sed moriendo*, according to the noble expression of St. Hilary of Poitiers. Obedient to the laws in so far as their conscience could obey them, they awaited the day whereon they should be required to burn a grain of incense before the image of the emperor; then, without hatred, without violence, were the emperor good or wicked, they refused, and human dignity was saved." [20]

[18] Upon Grapta see Origen, *Periarch*, lib. iv. cap. ii.
[19] Hermas, *Visio* iii. 2.
[20] Ampère, *Roman Empire at Rome.*

III.

In fact, St. John must have been commanded to sacrifice to the divinity of the emperor. It was at that time that Domitian had just thought of deifying himself; he had caused his statue to be placed in the most venerated sanctuaries, and whole hecatombs were immolated upon his altars.[21] "And every public document, as well as every discourse authorized by his name, was to be headed: 'Our Lord and God commands so and so.'"[22] Before that sacrilegious parallel of a Domitian with his divine Master we may imagine what must have been the answer of St. John. The Apostle was condemned, and he prepared, in joyfulness of heart for a death which no one had more longed for than himself.

The trial and the execution took place, as we all know, at the Latin Gate. It was one of the principal gates of the city, at the eastern extremity of Rome, upon the Appian Way, a little distance below the tomb of the Scipios, which are still to be visited. It led to Albanum, where Domitian possessed his imperial villa, which he had made his favorite abode, seeking from its lovely situation, its lake sleeping in a nest of verdure, that repose of soul which is not granted to the wicked. Around the Latin Gate, constructed of blocks of tufa, flanked with square towers, extended the free space styled *Pomœrium*, which surrounded the city with a girdle of shade similar to that of the boulevards arranged in our modern cities. Thence the view extended along the Appian Way, bordered with tombs, over the line of aqueducts of the Aqua Appia, over the gardens of Terence, the winding course of the Almo, and rested afar upon the Albanian hills, whose gentle slopes and purple, azure, and snow-

[21] Plin. *Panegyr.* c. lii.

[22] Dominus et Deus noster hoc fieri jubet.—Sueton. *Domitian.* c. xiii.

topped summits basked in the sun's rays. Towards the side of the city the few contiguous temples formed a small circular opening. On one hand were the temples of Apollo, of Hope, of Honor, and of Virtue; and on the other hand, overlooking the rest, stood that of Diana, larger and more beautiful than them all. Was there not in it all some religious intention, and is it not possible that they expressly sought the house of the goddess to sacrifice to her a chosen victim, and to immolate her great contemner under her eyes?

Let us, then, picture to ourselves that execution. We behold arriving thither that hideous populace, curious to witness the death of one of those Jews whom they so hate. If it be not presumable that the Senate repaired thither in a body, as some authors pretend, it is probable that more than one senator, at least, wished to hear for himself the testimony of a man who boasted to have lived in close intimacy with a God. The most ancient writers declare the emperor to have been present. The execution of a man was a spectacle whereof Domitian rarely deprived himself, says Suetonius. Besides, he who took pleasure in the learned juggleries of Apollonius of Tyana undoubtedly hoped to obtain from that priest, come from the East, some prodigy which might charm his tyrannical *ennui*. He came thither, no doubt, in that theatrical pomp which he loved to display under similar circumstances, wearing the buskins and purple chlamys, after the fashion of the Greeks, seated near his dwarf, surrounded by the flamen, and assisted by the college of his Flavian priests, all clad like himself. Around him the patricians—the very ones who, near by, had respectfully deliberated upon the dish proper to contain the imperial turbot—doubtless applauded; whilst Statius and Martial meditated what new flattery they might draw thence to delight the most clement emperor.

It is related that the prince began by cutting off the long locks which John wore after the manner of the Nazarenes. I readily believe it. Domitian was bald. A Christian matron who was present, it is said, collected them, and they are still venerated in the little chapel of St. John *in Oleo*, of which they are the treasure. The Roman law ordained that those who were condemned to death should be previously beaten with rods by the lictors. It was only after that flagellation that they underwent capital punishment. The torture which the choice of the emperor reserved to St. John consisted in being plunged into a caldron of boiling oil,[23] or merely of boiling water, as St. Gregory of Nyssa interprets it. That was no unknown species of torment, and the Acts of the Martyrs shows us more than one Christian smothered in the heating-rooms. In the middle of all the thermæ, even in private baths, was always a large basin of circular form, styled *caldarium*, surrounded by some steps, wherein was placed a reservoir of water incessantly heated by subterranean flames which surrounded its sides. "The temperature of that bath is such," said Seneca in one of his letters, "that any great criminal might be condemned to be scalded therein alive." That day the great criminal was St. John! Was not that that baptism, that prophesied bath, to which the divine Master had alluded when he had predicted to John that he should share in his sufferings?[24] Therefore he entered therein, as Bossuet expresses it, with the like promptitude

[23] Ista est felix Ecclesia ubi Apostolus Joannes, posteaquam in oleum igneum demersus, nihil passus est, in insulam relegatur.—Tertull. *Præscript.* xxxv. p. 215, Paris, 1675, and S. Hieronym. *in Jovinian.* lib. i.; *in Matth.* c. xx.—Fragmenta S. Polycarpi, apud Victorem Capuanum; Wouters, p. 1046.

[24] Calicem sane ebiberunt et baptismate baptizati sunt filii Zebedæi, quoniam Herodes Jacobum gladio interemit, Romanorum autem imperator Joannem . . . in Patmos insulam relegavit.—Origen. *in Joan.* t. ii. p. 6.

as, in the heat of summer, we cast ourselves into a bath for refreshment.

He did not find death therein. According to the noble imagery used by the great bishop, "the fiery, seething mass suddenly changed into a gentle dew." All the orders of the pretor, all the rage of the executioners, were powerless to rekindle the furnace; and, like the eagle, St. John came forth from the flames rejuvenated and renewed: *Renovabitur ut aquilæ juventus tua.*

That took place about the year 96 of our Lord, the eleventh year of the reign of Domitian, the emperor being consul for the sixteenth time, towards the sixtieth year of the holy Apostle, and the sixth day of May, upon which the Church celebrates the festival of that martyrdom and of that deliverance.

It was that deliverance which constituted the most bitter martyrdom of St. John. Let us once more listen to Bossuet: "Every man whom Jesus Christ loves, he so draws his heart after him that he desires nothing more ardently than to beat down his body as an old wall which separates him from Jesus Christ. But who could have so ardently desired death as St. John, who had inhaled that holy longing from the very wounds of his Master! He is therefore burning with the thirst of martyrdom. But, O useless thirst! Jesus prolongs his life to aggravate his cross. He must live to a decrepit old age." It is the weight of the cross, but it is the weight of glory: *gloriæ pondus*, according to the noble saying of St. Paul. Ah! if to gain heaven it required only one day, one decisive hour, and one sole effort, were it even a sublime effort, all the saints would answer that that would be purchasing happiness too cheaply. But, in place of dying on a day of triumph, to be condemned to languish in hidden patience; to bear unmurmuringly the weight of common days and

of dusty heat; to drain the chalice, not at one draught, but slowly, drop by drop, in all its bitterness; and, when we feel burning with eagerness for the fray, to remain faithful at our post, arms in hand, far from the noise of public affairs and from the intoxication of battle; to watch, in short—that is to say, not only to live, but to survive ourselves, and to reascend sixty years upon the cross which the Lord has provided for each of his sons, not upon the mountain, but in the obscurity of our own dwelling—that is the perpetual sacrifice which he prefers. And if there be a martyrdom superior to that of a noble death, it is undoubtedly that of such a life.

John was condemned to live. He did not remain at Rome. Domitian did not love to behold sages so near him; and those whom he spared he banished to the frontiers of the empire. It was thus that Dion Chrysostom and Epictetus had been constrained to take refuge among the barbarians. John did not return to Ephesus. But he was conducted into exile to one of the Sporades, opposite to the very church which he had so lately founded, as if to increase his punishment by the unceasingly-renewed regret for that land of his heart, near but absent.

We must follow St. John into the isle of Patmos.

CHAPTER XX.

ST. JOHN AT PATMOS.

I.

IT would be difficult to find in the Archipelago a more desolate spot than the island whither St. John was banished.

When, from the port of Miletus, one approached the shores of the Peloponnesus, from the bosom of the waters of the Icarian Sea appeared a rise of mountains to which a coating of verdure gave a certain look of fertility. That was the isle of Patmos, styled likewise Patmos in the Greek inscriptions found in that vicinity. Before the sojourn of St. John had immortalized it, it was so ignored that Thucydides, Strabo, and Pliny the Elder scarcely quote its name.

There were, however, there some remains of ancient civilization whose traces are recognizable in our own day. The Carians, the Dorians, and the Ionians had by turns disputed its possession. In the centre, and in the narrowest portion of the island, in the heart of a deep recess bounded by mountains, trunks of columns of the most beautiful white marble, strewn along the shore, served to moor the barks of fishermen and the schooners of merchants come from Anatolia; that was the harbor named Phora, or Pthora, now *La Scala*, where St. John disembarked. Near the harbor, upon the lowest slope of the mountains, lie ancient remains, fragments of pottery, primi-

tive bricks buried amid the grass, large Hellenic blocks, and marbles encrusted in the walls of an enclosure wherein the shepherds pen their cattle for the night.

That is all which remains of the ancient city of Patmos, where a population of from twelve to thirteen thousand men carried on commerce with the East, with Greece, and with the isles. The Acropolis was above. Upon the ridge which the Greeks still style "the Mountain of the Castle," between two narrow isthmuses, above a pool which discharges into the sea by a small canal, noble cyclopean ruins, the first layers of an ancient edifice, probably a temple, crumbled towers and innumerable fragments, now buried under thick tufts of wild mastic and dwarf locust trees, clearly indicate the site of the fortress, in the centre of which a rock, cut in the form of a semi-circular base, must formerly have upheld a pharos or a statue. To these dilapidated monuments join likewise a temple of Diana Scythica, whose foundation is attributed to Orestes; place in that temple a statue consecrated to Hecate by the daughter of the physician Glaucias, priestess of Artemis, and you can form some idea of the appearance of Patmos to the eyes of the Apostle, banished by Domitian.

However, then, at least, the mountains were covered with forests, and we still trace the beds of streams which descended to refresh the valleys. Now one slender torrent, called Nero-Mili, drags slowly along in summer through an almost dry channel. Some spare olive-trees, about thirty mulberry-trees, perhaps as many fig-trees, a few lemon-trees, some pines and some locust-trees, some yellow oaks, and about twenty cypress-trees, replace the ancient forests. Less than one hundred and fifty families are established in the town; and the isle, which the Italians designate by the name of Palmo, or of Palmosa, has but one solitary palm-tree, which grows in a valley styled the *Garden of the Saint*,

in like manner as, in his history, it has but one name, which overrules all others.[1]

II.

The memory of St. John is yet vivid in the isle of Patmos. They still point out all the places where it is said the Apostle signalized his passage by some benefit. They show a spot where he conferred baptism. It is now styled Rouvali. Two Byzantine chapels have been built thereon, one in honor of St. John, the other under the invocation of St. Polycarp, his disciple; and near these chapels are the remains of a basin, which the islanders still name the Baptistery.

All the movements of the Apostle have thus their theatre and their tradition in the place of his exile. The divine man stopped at the west of the island, near the town of Agrika, vestiges of which, as well as the name, are still to be found in the harbor of Gricon.

He dwelt some time in the town of Myrrhinousa, where he patiently struggled against a magician named Notianus. Some antique ruins have been discovered in a spot actually named Myrsini; it is almost the same name.

John descended to the hippodrome, where he convinced, converted, and baptized the Jew Philo, as well as his spouse. The existence of a hippodrome in the ancient Patmos has lately been revealed to us by a long inscription, setting forth that there took place those torch-races which were one of the favorite Grecian games.[2]

[1] I owe this description and many details regarding Patmos to the account of M. V. Guérin, *Description of the Isle of Patmos*, Paris, 1856. See likewise the *Revue des Cours Littéraires*, March 2, 1867, No. 14, p. 247, a lecture of Petit de Julleville: *A Visit to Patmos*.

[2] That inscription was published by M. Ross in his *Collection of Greek Inscriptions*.

At Proclos John resolves the doubts of the Jew Caros, who receives baptism. At Tychi, or Turche, he cures a paralytic; for miracles abound in local tradition. John has not disembarked ere he has already saved and restored to his father a child who has just been swallowed up by the waves. Scarcely has he entered the island when he delivers from the demon the eldest son of Myra, a grandee of that country; and that son is baptized between his mother and his sister, converts like himself. The governor cannot long resist the empire of truth and of charity. Souls are enlightened, signs multiply, the Gospel is borne into the valleys and upon the mountains, all flesh is called to see the salvation of God. The isle is reformed in a very short time. The rock witnesses the budding of the most fragrant virtues, and Patmos yet numbers, amid her titles of glory, that of having received her Christianity from the hand of St. John.[3]

A portion of these wonders, dear to the memory of the poor Christians of that spot, is found in the legendary account of Prochorus, who appears to have written upon the basis of the local traditions of Patmos, but in denaturalizing them under pretence of embellishing them.

One miracle, among these latter, has assumed more consistency in popular belief. It is found in almost all the ancient narratives; the Middle Ages incorporated it in their monuments of all kinds, and iconography has rendered its memory inseparable from that of the Apostle St. John.

Bede the Venerable thus hands down the account from antiquity:[4]

"A magistrate of the island, named Aristodemus, be-

[3] Upon the conversion of that isle by St. John see Metaphrast. *in Joan.*, apud Œcumen.

[4] Bedæ Opera, t. vii. col. 356.

holding the miracles of John, was greatly enraged thereat, and, wishing to put an end to them, he said to the saintly Apostle: 'Do you desire me to believe in your God also? Accept this trial: here is a violent poison—take it; if you do not die therefrom, I will become one of your disciples. But, that you may fully understand what manner of beverage it is, I will cause it to be swallowed by two condemned criminals; they will immediately die, and you shall drink it after them!' The wretch clearly thought to be rid of John by that cruel artifice. But the latter accepted the proposition; the two criminals drank the poison and expired. Then the holy bishop took the fatal cup in his turn, armed himself with the sign of the cross, and slowly drank the contents. He smilingly handed it back to him who had presented it to him, after which he hastened to resuscitate the two unfortunate victims of the mortal beverage. Which Aristodemus witnessing, he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ."

It is in memory of that circumstance that the Apostle is represented holding in his hand a cup whence escapes a serpent.

The Lord had said: "Among other signs which shall follow them that believe, they shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."[5]

III.

However, what was the condition of St. John in the isle of Patmos?

A very ancient bishop, martyred under the reign of Diocletian—St. Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau, in Styria—as also

[5] Mark xvi. 18.

St. Primatius, bishop in Africa in the sixth century, affirm that the Apostle labored in the mines at Patmos.[6]

They say nothing further; but local tradition confirms that remembrance. It is in that portion of the island where we still find excavations of ferruginous soil, formerly worked by the hand of man, that they place the theatre of almost all the miracles of the Apostle St. John. Thence it is, they say, the great exile drove out the magician Cynops, who had fascinated the islanders of Patmos by his enchantments.

Now a small chapel is dedicated to St. John upon the very place where possibly the old man busied himself in the mines, which he filled with the light of faith. From the summit of the mountain we distinctly perceive the continent of Asia, where the Apostle had left so many regrets and so many friends who longed for his return.

In fact, we possess a letter addressed by a bishop of Asia to the Apostle St. John during his banishment. That letter is from St. Denis, or Dionysius, then Bishop of Athens, according to tradition. We are not unaware how violently that tradition has been attacked during the preceding two centuries. But we know likewise that patient erudition and that well-supported discussion have confirmed it in our own age. Denis was the friend of Timothy, and, like him, a disciple of St. Paul. It was to him that Dionysius had dedicated his mystic book of the *Divine Names*. Older than Timothy, the Areopagite styled him "his child, his well-beloved Timothy"; and that friendship undoubtedly brought him to Ephesus, where he had met and heard St.

[6] *Biblioth. Patrum*, t. i p. 579. *Comment. S. Victorini in Apoc.* Primat. *Comment. in Apoc.*; *Bibl. Patrum*, t. i. p. 1357. Sulpitius Severus says (lib. ii. p. 149): *Quando hoc vidit Joannes, erat in insula Pathmos, in metallum damnatus a Domitiano Cæsare.* In the Chronicle of Freculfe (t. ii. l b ii. cap. ix., apud *Biblioth. Patr.*, t. xiv. p. 1153): "Hic dum Evangelium Christi in Asia prædicaret, a Domitiano Cæsare in Pathmos insula metallo relegatur."

John in those celestial conferences whereof, better than any other, Dionysius seems to have possessed the secret. Therefore, when he learned that St. John had borne testimony to Jesus before the Emperor Domitian, and that he was then exiled to Patmos, he hastened to address to him an epistle which exhales the breath of Plato with the inspiration of St. Paul. He writes thus:

"I salute thee, holy soul; thou art my beloved: that is the name I bestow upon thee above all others.

"Again I salute thee, O my beloved!—thou who wert so dear to Him who is true beauty, the seducing beauty which alone merits love.

"It is not surprising that the wicked should drive the disciples of Jesus from the cities, that the impious should withdraw themselves from the society of the saints, since Christ has predicted it.

"But as to the just, already in this world they have a foretaste of the joys of the future life. They lead an angelic existence amongst men; nothing troubles their mind; they are the true children of God, filled with his goodness, enriched by him with all blessings.

"Far from me the mere suspicion that you suffer. The torments of the body you merely feel, but you are not inconvenienced thereby.

"I shall blame, as is fitting, those who persecute you—senseless beings who thus hope to extinguish the sun of the Gospel! But, at the same time, I pray God that, ceasing to injure you, they may be converted to the truth, and may recall you near them to enter in their turn into holy light.

"Furthermore, whatever happen, nothing will deprive us of the dazzling brightness of John, the Apostle of Christ. We possess it to-day in the true doctrine which we hold from you; we recall it to you unceasingly; and I have the assurance we shall shortly be reunited to you.

"You and I have learned it from God himself; therefore I merit confidence when I say assuredly: You will be delivered from the prison of Patmos, you will return into Asia, and there you will give the example of imitating the good God to the race of sons who will follow in your footsteps." [7]

But ere restoring him to the desires of his family, God owed his Apostle a consolation. It is when we have just sacrificed all to God that God prepares to overwhelm us with his gifts. On the day of his election John had heard his Master make the promise related in the first chapter of his book: "Amen, amen I say to you, you shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." [8] That announcement was about to be fulfilled. We have witnessed the day of the suffering of John; behold, we approach the great morrow of God, and the mystery of the Apocalypse is about to be unfolded before our eyes.

[7] Works of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, translated from the Greek by Mgr. Darboy, p. 516, Paris, 1845. See upon the authenticity of those works the learned introduction of the Archbishop of Paris.

[8] John i. 51.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN.

I.

IT was during his exile that St. John had the celebrated vision of the Apocalypse.

"I John your brother," writes he at the head of that noble book, "your partner in tribulation, and in the kingdom, and patience in Christ Jesus, was in the island which is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus.

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."[1]

That was the solemn voice of divine revelation; and we are now approaching the most astonishing marvel of this history.

A very short distance from the harbor of La Scala and from the ancient city of Patmos, we climb by a steep and difficult path the Mountain of St. John; having passed the Hellenic School, built two centuries since upon the rock itself, and wherein celebrated masters then attracted crowds of students from continental Greece and her islands, we reach a grotto which the islanders style *The Grotto of the Apocalypse*. It is a large cell, formed by the natural excavations of the mountain, covered by the crannied vault of the rock, and in which we notice the traces of a stream which issued from the stone, as is represented in the dwellings of

[1] Apoc. i. 9–10.

the early anchorites. St. Christodulus, founder of the Monastery of Patmos, made of it a chapel, the portico whereof is ornamented with ancient paintings representing scenes from the Apocalypse.

It is there, in fact, that, according to the manuscript recital of Nicetas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, St. John beheld the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. He prepared himself for it, he says, by silence, by fasting, and by prayer. After ten days of recollection a voice descended from heaven, the holy ecstasy commenced, Jesus Christ appeared to the eyes of his friend, and John was transported into the power of God.

The Apocalypse of St. John is clearly by the same hand and by the same author as the Gospel. Undoubtedly it differs therefrom, and must necessarily differ in some points, as prophecy differs from narrative, as vision differs from historic action. But throughout it is the doctrine and the language of St. John. The dogmatic basis is the theology of Jesus Christ, God made man. He is at first man: he is the lion of *Juda*, he is the root of *David*. He is God; he styles himself the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. The Word of God is the name he bestows upon himself. As in the Gospel, he is the Lamb of God who taketh away sin, and the Church is the spouse whom he washes in his blood. As in the Gospel, grace is represented under the image of the fountain whence flows the water of life. The Hebraisms mingled with Grecian forms of speech alike argue the Galilean fisherman and the priest of Ionia. Finally, the external proof of its authenticity leaves still less room for doubt; and the Apocalypse is ranked amid the number of the canonical books of the Church.[2]

[2] The Greek writers of the first centuries quote the Apocalypse or allude to it. Polycarp refers to it in chapter vi. of his letter to the Philippians.

Bossuet has written admirably regarding this book; but even he is scarcely equal to the eloquence of the subject.

"Those," he writes, "who have a taste for piety find special attraction in that revelation of St. John. The mere name of Jesus Christ, with which it is headed, inspires at once holy joy. . . . It is here, then, Jesus Christ whom we must regard as the true prophet; and if we are prepared for something grand when, opening the ancient prophesies, we behold upon the title-page: *The Visions of Isaias, Son of Amos; The Words of Jeremias, Son of Helcias*, and so of others, how must we be affected when we read at the heading of that book: *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God?*

"All corresponds to that noble title. Notwithstanding the depths of that divine book, we feel, in reading it, so sweet, yet at the same time so magnificent, an impression of the majesty of God, such high ideas of the mystery of Jesus Christ, so lively gratitude for the nation redeemed by his blood; we find such noble images of his victories and of his reign, with such wonderful songs to celebrate his greatness, that it is calculated to ravish heaven and earth. . . .

"All the beauty of the Scriptures is condensed in that book. Whatever is most touching, most vivid, and most majestic in the law and in the prophets receives therein new splendor, and repasses before our eyes to fill us with consolation and graces for ever. . . . All the men inspired by

Papias seeks therein a support for his millenarian ideas; and Andreas, a writer of the fifth century, cites an explanation of his upon Apocalypse xii. 7 (Andreæ, *Præfat. ad Comment. in Apocalyps.*) St. Justin Martyr, who wrote about the year 139, cites it as positively by John (*Dial. cum Tryphon.*) According to Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. xxvi.), Melito wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse. Allusions to that book are evident in the letter of the Church of Lyons to the Churches of Asia Minor (*Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* v. 1). The testimony of Irenæus (*contra Hæres.* iv. xx.), of Clement of Alexandria (*Stromat.* vi. 66), of Tertullian (*adv. Marcion.* iii. 54), and of Origen (see Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. xxv.), are unequivocal as to the authenticity of the Apocalypse.

God seem to have brought thither whatever they possess that is richest and grandest to compose the most beautiful picture imaginable of the glory of Jesus Christ; and one would say that, to write that admirable book, John had received the spirit of all the prophets.

"Let us add to so many marvels that which surpasses all others: I mean the happiness of listening to the voice and beholding the actions of Jesus Christ risen. The Apocalypse is the Gospel of Jesus Christ resuscitated, beginning to exercise the almighty power which his Father has given him in heaven and upon earth."[3]

But it was before all and above all the Apostle who was overwhelmed with the joy of hearing and of once more beholding his glorious Master. For more than forty years he had lived only in him; but he lived far from him. The Lord had said: "I will that that man shall dwell in me until I come!" John always remained, John ever waited: the Friend did not come. "What torture!" again exclaims Bossuet. "O divine Saviour! your love is too severe for him." Is it not cruel that he whom you love best should wait longer than the others for the happiness of beholding you as you are, face to face?

Jesus consoled him. Paul had already had the joy of seeing his Master gloriously reigning in the third heaven. That heaven opened to John; he recognized Jesus therein! *Dominus est!*—it is the Christ! But now what glory! what concerts! what happiness! He contemplates him; he is no longer the criminal—he is the prince; he wears the crown. He is the high-priest; he is clothed in the flowing robe, and bears the golden girdle. He is the Word; his speech is piercing as a sword and strong as brass. In short, he is the Eternal; for the hairs of his head are white as snow, whilst at the same time the bril-

[3] Bossuet upon the Apocalypse, Preface.

liancy of his face is as the sun at mid-day; beauty ever ancient, yet always new; Alpha and Omega, beginning and last end—death alone will be capable of giving us an idea of what was to St. John that manifestation of what he alone loved of that which alone is lovely; and if it be true that love requires admiration and adoration, what flame must have enkindled within that ever-youthful heart the desired apparition of Him whom he had beheld expire upon a cross, and whom he now saw reigning sovereignly in his kingdom of heaven: *Ego Joannes socius in tribulatione, in regno Christi!* By these latter words St. John seems to hint that the ancient prayer of his mother had been granted, and that he had obtained that glorious place at the right hand of the King of Heaven which Salome had formerly demanded for him in the Gospel.

But John alone can fitly represent those things: "I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks: and in the midst one like to the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

"And his head and his hairs were white, as white wool, and as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire.

"And his feet like unto fine brass, as in a fiery furnace. And his voice as the sound of many waters.

"And he had in his right hand seven stars. And from his mouth came out a sharp two-edged sword [image of his word]; and his face was as the sun shineth in his power.

"And when I had seen him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying: Fear not. I am the first and the last,

"And alive, and was dead, and behold I am living for ever, and have the keys of death and of hell.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, who was, who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.

"Write therefore the things which thou hast seen, and which are, and which must be done hereafter."[4]

"Hitherto," remarks Bossuet, "St. John has merely, as it were, opened the theatre, and prepared minds for what they are to witness."

It would be singularly cramping the Apocalypse to see therein solely the consolations which God bestowed upon his Apostle. The Revelator came for great designs, and it is through its moral, prophetic, and mystic bearing that that book is a sublime work. It is composed of three parts: firstly, the *warnings*, next the *predictions*, finally the perspectives and the celestial *promises*; these are as the three acts of that universal drama wherein God assumes the principal character, wherein all the destinies of this world and of the next pass under his hand, and whose action, opening in an obscure island, pursues its way throughout entire creation, and develops itself in heaven.

II.

However, the first scenes did not embrace that extent; there was question merely of the Church of the earth. Of all the miseries of exile, the greatest, to St. John, was his absence from those young colonies which he had so recently founded in the faith of Jesus. "I will return," he repeats to them in the name of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I return; keep faithful until I come!—*Veniam tibi cito, tenete donec veniam!*" Meanwhile, each of those churches, his daughters, passes before his eyes; and in their weaknesses, their combats, and their virtues Jesus Christ shows John

[4] Apoc. i. 12–19 8.

the virtues, the combats, and the future sorrows of the universal Church.

The picture which John presents us of the Christian communities of Asia is that of a society exposed to peril, in a vast revolution of morals and of doctrines. The Church thenceforth entered that perpetually-dying yet immortal existence which is the most divine feature in her history. At Smyrna the Jews disturbed her; at Pergamos the schools rebelled against her faith; at Thyatira a woman, styling herself a prophetess, a second Jezabel, preached by word and by example the ever-novel morality of free-living; finally, at Philadelphia the synagogue of Satan set itself above the Church of Jesus.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, religion witnessed the tottering of her firmest supports. To the first enthusiasm of every new beginning had already succeeded that second period of tepidity and of weariness which would threaten the loss of all, did not the Church possess within herself the principle of eternal rejuvenescence. The angels of the churches, as John styles the bishops, failed in their courage. The Angel of Ephesus himself had cooled from his first charity. The Angel of Thyatira had not resisted with sufficient force the oppositions of a woman raised up for the ruin of his people. The Angel of Sardis had no more life save in name. He of Laodicea had grown tepid in the hour of combat. It is time that God himself descend into the arena and defend his spouse by the sword of the word, as he himself declares. That is the subject of all the first portion, which Bossuet styles the Warnings.

But the word of God is a sword which heals the wounds which it inflicts; through the consuming fire of his holy anger we perceive the flow of that sweet unction of Jesus Christ, whose heart seems to liquify itself entirely upon the lips of the Apostle of love.

"Thou art poor," says he to the Bishop of Laodicea, "thou art blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich: and mayest be clothed in white garments, and the shame of thy nakedness may not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous therefore and do penance. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne: as I also have overcome, and am set down with my Father, in his throne." [5]

However, those were certainly not men of little faith who are here designated by the prophet. We know some of them; and here again history lends great light to revelation.

That Angel of the Church of Ephesus, momentarily cast down, was that brave Timothy whose charity was soon to lead him to martyrdom.

That Angel of the Church of Smyrna we find likewise in the illustrious Polycarp, whose long apostolate we read elsewhere; and those Jews whom John represents as eager for his ruin we shall quickly meet again enkindling the pyre whereon the saintly old man expired.

St. John names Antipas "faithful witness of Jesus, in that city of Pergamos, capital of Satan," as he styles it; and we know that, in fact, the crowd of students had been pleased to inflict upon that Christian, Jew by name and by race, a classical torment by enclosing him, as did the tyrant Phalaris, in a brazen bull, the sides of which had been previously heated.

Finally, that terrestrial Angel of the Church of Philadel-

[5] Apoc. iii. 17-21.

phia, who, "feeble as he was, had kept the word of God before the tyrants, and had become one of the pillars of the temple," is recognizable for all those virtues in the letter which Ignatius will shortly write to the Philadelphians: "On seeing your bishop I realized that if he had been promoted to the ministry of the Christian communion, it was not by himself, neither by the action of men, nor by vainglory, but through the love of Jesus Christ and of God the Father, in the counsels of a goodness which makes me tremble for myself. He walks in the commandments of the Lord, and justice regulates all the movements of his soul like the strings of a harp. The priest Zachary was not formerly more irreproachable."

There were then heroic courage and saintly virtues; but the times were evil. St. John sought to teach men by those teachings that, in all combats sustained for the Church, they must never be cast down; that we are not alone, that God encourages us; and that, above that noise of battle and of tempest, we must lend an ear to the voice which cries to us: "Fear not; be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life."

III.

After having received the revelation of souls, whereof he was the father, and heard the warnings of the Lord to the angels of the churches, John saw the celestial horizons enlarge before him. The divine laws of general providence in the government of nations spread themselves before his eyes, and the prophet entered into the policy of God.

There is nothing grander than the principles which it lays down, and naught is clearer than the exact application which it makes thereof to the two revolutions which it announces in the world.

The first truth shown to St. John is divine action sovereign in history. Be the debate existing with Stoicians and Cerinthians, as in the time of St. John; be it, as to-day, between spiritualism and materialism, the eternal question is to know if the supreme, definitive future belong to the strong and to the skilful; if, to be great, it suffice to be happy; if the conclusion of things lie in their success; if, in short, right and duty be but beautiful fictions, or if those two grand words be likewise great things whose final sanction rests in the hands of God. To these problems the prophet received a solution. To human policy, infirm or insidious, the Apocalypse opposes divine policy, powerful but patient, certain of her aim, watching man, who struggles whilst God leads him; shaking momentarily the thrones of kings, who hide themselves for fear; and holding suspended the stroke of his scourges over the heads of empires intoxicated with rule, with glory, and with voluptuousness.

That is the first answer; there is another, which completes it, namely, that God does all things here below for the Church; that there is but one interest for him—that of souls; that there is but one real combat—that of good against evil, symbolized by that of that woman, beautiful as the light, trampling the moon under her feet and crowned with stars, who is religion, against the dragon, whose rage unceasingly attacks the children born of that immortal mother. Let minds curious of high philosophy study the Apocalypse from that point of view; there is none surer nor nobler.

The vision of St. John showed him that wisdom applied to the great events of the future of the Church and of the world.

What are those events? When were they accomplished, or when will they be? Assuredly, darkness here mingles

with light; the Apocalypse is still, in a great number of places, the book closed with seven seals; the allegories of that Oriental tongue conceal many mysteries which furnish and will furnish cause of dispute to doctors and to mystical writers. "The future," remarks Bossuet, "almost always proves far different to what we think; and the things even which God has revealed arrive by far other ways than we would have imagined. Therefore question me not concerning that future. That which is of immediate sense, which I look upon as accomplished, it is undoubtedly useful to search into it." [6]

Thus the obscurity of certain prophecies could not authorize the neglect of all. Some are clear, and through those shadows we see loom two immense circumstances, of which John was the prophet, and whereof we are witnesses.

The first event is the reprobation and the final fall of the Roman Empire. That was, however, the epoch when the star of Rome seemed to shine most brilliantly. No mortal glance could have perceived Alaric and his barbarians. John sees them. What strange apparition of ages, and how far behind him the prophet leaves the two great historians, one of whom has just expired, while the other was carving for himself unequalled renown! Titus Livy, relating the past of his country, had seen but her glory; Tacitus, after him, painter of the present age, unveiled its vices. The historian of the future was that exile, hurling, from his solitary rock of Patmos, irrefragable edicts against the Rome of Domitian, and relating the ruin of the Eternal City. "That new Babylon, that city which rises like seven proud heads upon her seven celebrated hills; that mother filled with impurity and luxury, clad in purple as becomes a queen, bearing written upon her forehead her mysterious

[6] Bossuet, *Pref. to the Apocalypse*, xv.

name; rich with the gold of the world, covered with precious stones, holding the cup of abomination, drunk with the blood of the martyrs and the saints of Jesus; the great city, in short, which had empire over the kings of the earth."[7] There is no room for mistake; it is clearly the portrait of Rome, and is the lamentable history of her ruin which the Angel of Patmos describes when, three centuries in advance, he cries:

"*Cecidit, cecidit Babylon magna*—Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. Go out from her, my people: that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. In one day shall come upon her death, and mourning, and famine; she shall be burned with fire, and the kings of the earth, who have lived in delicacies with her, shall weep, and shall bewail themselves over her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning. The ship-masters, and they that sail into the seas, and the mariners, stood afar off, and cried, seeing the place of her burning, saying: What city is like to this great city?"[8]

Similar prophecies springing up amid the triumphs of Rome, and during the feasts which inebriated Greece, excited anger and ridicule, the echo whereof we find in the satire of the time, *The Patriot and the Catechumen*, which we have already quoted.

"How goes the world?" asks a Christian.

"Well, all will be well," answers the pagan.

The Christians shake their heads and frown. "No," say they, "the country is threatened with great evils!" And forthwith, babbling a thousand charming things, they speak of revolutions, of great troubles, of disorder threatening the city, of powerless armies, and of conquering enemies.

At this picture the patriot—the name assumed by the pagan—declares that he has no control over himself; that

[7] Apoc. xvii. xviii.

[8] Apoc. xviii. 2 *et seq.*

he is boiling with anger. "Most wretched of men," he exclaims, "enough impertinence! Cease braving these lion-hearted men, who bear the lance and the buckler, and breathe only war. Are you not fearful lest the woes wherewith you menace us do not turn against yourselves, who thus dare despise your country?

"Airy men," said he, "in what cloudy region have you seen these things? If such be the light of your prophecies, your gross ignorance has twice deceived you. Old women's tales all that! Can you possibly know things to come? No; these things are not, and will never be. You are the sport of dreams; you take pleasure only in evil; you suffer at our happiness; you hold it in horror; and you profit thereof by wishing us evil! For pity's sake end these follies, these silly reveries and perverse designs, or tremble lest some god make you pay dearly the crime of your imprecations against your country, and the words wherewith you dishonor her."

At the end, as if in contrast, the pamphlet represents a brave man arriving breathlessly to announce pompously that the Persians were vanquished, that Susa was reduced, and that the whole province of Arabia had submitted. That was the refutation of sinister prophecies, and naught remained but to offer thanksgiving to the gods, and to suffer fools to prate at will.

The Visigoths undertook the literal accomplishment of the prophecy of St. John.[9] As he had predicted, there were some of the elect who, through horror of the sins and from fear of the misfortunes of that infidel Rome, quitted her walls, and embarked upon ships, whence they beheld the flames devouring the dwellings of the accursed city. Some fled to Africa and sought St. Augustine, who was then pre-

[9] See upon the taking of Rome by Alaric, Zozim. *Hist.* lib. v. p. 105, Basileæ. S. Hieronym. *ad Princ. Epitaph. Marc. Epistol.* xvi., *nunc* xcvi.

paring his book of the *City of God.* It was the history of the accomplishment of the Apocalypse, and the eloquent development of the policy of God.[10] Others took refuge near St. Jerome, who, hidden and weeping in his grotto of Bethlehem, then read the gloomy Visions of Ezechiel. Hearing them relate the disasters of his country, he recalled the words of the inspired Apostle, and, laying aside his prophet, he exclaimed, like the Angel of the Apocalypse: "*Factum est*—it is done. Babylon is fallen; Rome is taken, pillaged, destroyed by fire, and become the sepulchre of her own children. The light of the universe is extinct, the head of the empire is laid low, the whole world has perished in one city."[11]

But, as it has been said, God effaces himself but to write; and a second event, no less grand, but far happier, was shown to St. John.

"It is neither the fall of Rome," observes Bossuet, "nor that of the idolatrous and persecuting empire, which Jesus Christ wishes principally to discover to his prophet; it is, in the fall of that empire, the overthrow of idolatry, and, with the ruin of the empire of Satan, the perfect establishment of the reign of Jesus Christ and of his Church.

"Jesus Christ had said: 'Now is the judgment of the world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto myself.'[12] The accomplishment of these words of our Lord, so carefully noted in St. John, constitutes the true subject of his Apocalypse. We perceive therein the combats of the devil and of his angels against the infant Church. Their efforts are useless, their spells discovered;

[10] S. August. *de Civitate Dei*, lib. xx. *integr.*
[11] S. Hieronym. *Prœmium in lib. i. et iii. Ezech.*
[12] John xii. 31, 32.

the dragon is enchained, the prince of the world is vanquished; the demon, with the beast and with the false prophet, is cast into a pool of fire and of brimstone, there to be tormented for ever and ever.[13]

"On the other hand, at the same time, we behold Jesus Christ, the conqueror, and all the kingdoms of the world forming his own. Thus he draws all the world to himself, and his martyrs sit to judge the world."[14]

The Council of Nicea offered a fine image of that triumph of Christ: "For the first time since the days of Moses, the emancipator of man amid nations, slaves of ignorance and of force, was renewed the divine manifestation of Sinai. As around the camp of the Hebrews, the idols were standing around the Council of Nicea when the interpreters of the new law proclaimed the supreme truth of the world—the unity of God and the divinity of Jesus. Arius was condemned. The fables of priests who had hidden the living principle, mysteries wherein philosophers had enveloped it, vanished. The veil of the sanctuary was rent with the cross of Christ; man saw God face to face. Then was composed that symbol which Christians repeat fifteen centuries after over the entire face of the globe."[15] There sat in that day "those who had suffered for the testimony of Jesus, and judgment was given unto them."[16] The Fathers of the Council could sing together the Canticle of Moses: "Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, O King of ages. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come, and shall adore in thy sight, because thy judgments are manifest."[17]

[13] Apoc. xix. 10; xx. 9, 10.
[14] Bossuet, *Apocalypse*, ch. iii. p. 130.
[15] Chateaubriand, *Essays*, 2d Disc.
[16] Apoc. xx. 4.
[17] Apoc. xv. 2-4.

IV.

But the supreme triumph of the Church is not in this world. In the latter part of the book are unveiled the glories of eternity after those of time; heaven opens before St. John for the third time. It is no longer question of the Church of Asia nor of the Roman Empire. The final act of the drama unravels itself in the bosom of God:

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven, and the first earth was gone, and the sea is now no more.

"And I John saw the holy city the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

"And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people: and God himself with them shall be their God.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.

"And he that sat upon the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new. . . .

"And he said to me again: It is done: I am Alpha and Omega: the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely.

"He that shall overcome shall possess these things, and I will be his God: and he shall be my son."[18]

The universal palingenesia of the world fills the other chapter. The new Jerusalem rises from the desert, shining with light. The river of life flows therein, clear as crystal; and while here below we walk in death, the tree of

[18] Apoc. xxi. 1 et sq.

life shades the new nations, which it nourishes with its ever-growing fruits. There is no more night there, there is no more darkness; the sun itself has no office in that abode of immortal splendor, which God fills with light, and whereof he is the centre.[19] There is radiant beauty, there is spotless purity; nothing stained could enter that dwelling, where evil has no place. Time itself is no more, and the reign of the elect knows no end. "The Spirit and the Bride mutually say, Come." For, remarks St. Teresa, that which precedes upon earth was but the espousals; here is the marriage of the soul with God.

Hope has been verified; all dreams are realized, all desires are fulfilled; and, himself bearing witness of his promises, John the prophet adds: "I John have heard and seen these things. And after I had seen and heard, I fell down before the feet of the angel who had shown me these things, and I adored."

Are we not tempted to adore in our turn after reading those pages? "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book," twice repeated the Apostle. Blessed is he who believes that here below God leads us. Blessed is he who hopes that above God himself will be our recompense.

Behold the new heaven effacing all which had been thitherto heard concerning it. For four thousand years men had dreamed of heaven. All eyes were turned thitherward, but, unable to perceive it, men had formed very incomplete ideas thereof, quite frequently utterly erroneous ones:

[19] "The soul never more quits her centre," said St. Teresa, "and nothing more troubles her peace. Here is the marriage of the soul with God; what preceded were merely espousals. God's visits quickly pass; here that favor lasts always. Life ever bubbles and flows, and spreads itself throughout the dwellings of the soul. That central abode is the place of the divine sun, inhabited by the great God, . . . God being that divine sun, who is and who dwells ever in the centre of the soul, fertilized by his gentle and vivifying warmth."—St. Teresa, *Interior Castle*, Abode vii. ch. i.

eye had not seen, ear had not heard, neither had the heart imagined, what God prepared for those whom he loved. Homer figured therein games and combats; Plato placed therein wisdom and beauty; Pythagoras located therein the harmonious spheres; Cicero found there, in a famous dream, glory and country; Virgil made it to consist in light and in virtue; but, noble as that was, it still resembled earth—it was not heaven, because it wanted the presence and the vision of God.

"Behold the tabernacle of God with men; he shall dwell with them!" The first who saw that saw beatitude—the only thing worthy of God and alone worthy of man; for the infinite began to appear to him. "Lord, what have I desired, and what have I sought in heaven and upon earth, save thee, O my God?" asked the Psalmist. And what do we ourselves seek in all which shines and vanishes, save the divine Good, which here escapes our embraces? "But I shall be satisfied, Lord, when thy glory shall appear," said the royal prophet. That plenitude is revealed by the Apocalypse, wherein man and God are united in a perfect and indissoluble society.

An immense society, an innumerable multitude, formed of every tribe, race, and tongue! The Elysium of the pagans is the exclusive abode of heroes and of kings; and who else, in fact, do we find wandering through the Elysian meadows and along the fields of asphodel? True heaven, the heaven of John, opens to the more numerous as well as to the greatest victors; for the starry crowns are the price of sanctity. Hitherto the passions, the needs, and consequently the sufferings of earth followed pagan souls into their melancholy paradise; now naught sorrows the souls who drink of life at the inexhaustible fountains of God and of the Lamb. Finally, in Elysium, all happiness expired in fatal forgetfulness. The Lethe does not

flow through the paradise of St. John; there is neither death nor separation, and the affections in God are as lasting as himself.

Such will be the beauty, such will be the unity, such will be the immensity, such will be the eternity, of the living dwelling which the Scripture styles *the heavenly Jerusalem.* It is illumined with "the light of the Lamb," as St. John says again—"the Lamb immolated from the beginning of the world." Yesterday it was the lamb, a figurative victim, which the Jews shared in the Paschal festival. To-day, here below, it is the Lamb whom John meets upon the banks of the Jordan, and whom he eats at the Last Supper: *Ecce Agnus Dei!* To-morrow it will be the glorified Lamb, triumphant upon the eternal altar, sung in every tongue; there is no wider synthesis than that.

St. John had written in his Apocalypse: "I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book. And if any one shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from these things that are written in this book." [20]

In despite of these anathemas, the Apocalypse of St. John underwent several species of forgery and of travesty. There was a pretended Apocalypse of St. Peter, which, during a certain time, obtained some credit. There was the Banishment of St. Paul to the third heaven, which was composed and celebrated by the Gnostics. Cerinthus himself had written an Apocalypse in opposition to that of the holy Apostle. Finally, there appeared the apocryphal

[20] Apoc. xxii. 18, 19.

Apocalypse of St. Thomas and of St. Stephen, both rejected by Pope St. Gelasius. The vapory genius of the East specially delighted to feed upon those mystic reveries; and we are not sufficiently apprised of the peril to which the illuminism of that epoch exposed the faith. The menaces of St. John were aimed at the defence of wandering reason against her own excesses, by opposing as a rampart the sacred barrier of the Gospel.

St. John did not long remain in the island of Patmos after that revelation. News from Rome apprised him that Domitian had finally expiated his crimes September 15 of the year 96. He was informed at the same time of the accession of Nerva, whose first act was the recall of those banished for cause of *impiety*. Thus Dion Cassius designates Christianity, of which he was ignorant.

St. John quitted Patmos.[21] We read that the body of islanders, grieving for his departure, cast themselves at the Apostle's feet, and said to him, weeping bitterly: "Good master, we are yet too weak in the faith; remain with us, do not abandon us, or at least leave us some of your writings which may strengthen us in the word of God."[22] John left them his book of the Apocalypse. Then, bidding them adieu, he took shipping and returned to Ephesus. He had been absent thence but two years.

[21] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. xv. xvii.
[22] Procnor. cap. xlv. Biblioth. Patr. t. ii.

CHAPTER XXII.

RETURN TO EPHESUS—PREACHING OF JOHN—EPISTLE TO ELECTA.

I.

IT was therefore in the year 97 that the Apostle was enabled to revisit his Church of Ephesus, where al ardently desired the happiness and the blessing of his presence.

In fact, that noble Christian community was just then plunged in deep mourning. According to the *Martyrology* and the *Menologium*, during that same year took place the glorious death of their bishop, Timothy, the disciple of St. Paul and the companion of St. John. John, who had left "that good soldier of Christ" in the strongest of the fight, struggling against heresy and against idolatry, did not ignore his peril. From his solitary isle he beheld and denounced in his Apocalypse the abominations which were the worst and most contagious for the flock—that of voluptuousness. But, whilst praising "the great works, the labor, and the patience of the Angel of the Church of Ephesus," John already spoke of "the evils he had supported for the name of Jesus Christ," and warned him that evil would have mortal revenge against him.

He was not deceived. The morrow after earthquakes which had shaken her to her foundations, silly Ephesus celebrated the bacchanalian worship of her gods and her goddesses over her tombs and her ruins. The most renowned of these feasts was the annual assemblage, styled *Cutagogia*—

a species of orgies which recalled the monstrous excesses of Byblos or of Corinth. A crowd, drunk with wine and with debauchery, armed with clubs, bearing statues of their gods, besmeared and masked, traversed the principal quarters of the city, chanting obscene verses and impudently attacking men and women, without sparing the frequently murderous violence legitimized by the worship of their divinity.

It was during one of these feasts that Timothy perished. It was the fashion to mingle with those delirious cries of intoxication gross insults against Christ and the Christians. The bishop could not endure them; indignant at these horrors, he no longer contained himself, say his Acts. He boldly appeared before the impious procession, protesting against these blasphemies in the name of Jesus Christ. That was inviting death. His presence roused the ferocious assembly to fury. He was overwhelmed by stones, and then finished by clubs. It did not require much to slay a man so weak of body, and who had long merely dragged through life.[1]

"My son," St. Paul had formerly written to him in his farewell letter—"my son, be thou ever vigilant in the grace of Christ, labor in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. Be sober. For I am even now laboring in chains like a malefactor; but the word of God is not bound. Behold the faithful saying: If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me at the last day."[2]

[1] Polycrat. *Vita S. Tim.*, Edit. P. Pithou; Baron. *Annals Eccl.* t. i. p. 395; Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, pp. 669-672; Bolland. *Acta Sanctorum*, xxiv. *Januarii*.

[2] 2 Tim. iv. 5-8.

Timothy went to share that crown. He yet breathed when his disciples bore him to a neighboring mountain, whereon the bishop expired amid their prayers. That, therefore, took place in the beginning of the year 97, the second of the reign of Nerva, the 24th of January, on which day the feast of the saint is celebrated in the Latin Church. A grotto of Mt. Libate, upon which he died, received the body of the martyr. St. John was ere long to repose beside him.

It required nothing less than the arrival of the Apostle to heal those evils and to console those sorrows. All Christian Asia rejoiced over his return, and it was then that, according to a pure conjecture of the learned Baronius, Dionysius the Areopagite, then bishop of Athens, came to Ephesus to enjoy the edification of the presence and of the conversation of St. John.

The Areopagite seems to have made that engagement with himself when he wrote to Patmos: "We shall shortly be reunited to you." If history and the works of Dionysius be worthy of credit, John and himself met near the relics of Timothy, whom both had so loved in Jesus Christ.

It was to him that Dionysius had lately written: "Those who have led a holy life arrive, filled with hope and divine joy, at the term of death as the end of their pious combats. They know that they thus enter the society of souls, and that, united to Jesus as perfect members, they find the sweetness of immortal repose. Nothing troubles the death-bed of the just when, seeing his struggle end, he feels superabounding joy, and enters the happy road of regeneration. His relatives, the brothers of his soul, esteem him blessed to have reached the goal as conqueror. They bless in thanksgiving the Author of his triumph, desirous themselves to obtain a similar share. They present his

remains to the hierarchy, that he may be crowned. . . . As to the radiant splendor of celestial recompense, who could depict that immortality exempt from sorrow and filled with light! No, 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for those who love him.'"[3]

Baronius presumes that it was after that visit to St. John, and probably, also, at the instigation of the Apostle, that Dionysius took the road towards Rome, in order to present himself to the Pontiff St. Clement and to receive his commands. The learned annalist could not resist the enticing hypothesis of a conference between John and the Areopagite, from which issued possibly the future apostolate of Gaul and the mission of the first bishop of Paris.[4]

II.

John himself quickly recommenced his apostolic course throughout Asia, happy to salute in him the confessor of the faith which he came to announce. Antiquity has preserved to us the remembrance of the missions of St. John amid the Christian communities founded,[5] instituted, and governed by him. Himself in his epistles represents himself as visiting his churches one after the other, combating heresies, correcting errors, consoling sorrows, and bearing everywhere that meekness and gentleness which is

[3] St. Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, ch. vii. §§ 1, 3, and 5, p. 321 et sq.

[4] Joannem mox convenisse Dionysium æquum est opinari. Ad hæc tempora Dionysium egisse in Oriente facile omnes consentiunt; post hæc vero fortasse, concilio Joannis, Romam ad Clementem pontificem se contulisse.—Baron. *Ann. Eccl.* t. i. p. 742.

[5] Sancti Patres tradunt quod, post reversionem suam de exsilio, in Epheso et circa adjacentia loca prædicaverit, ibique mortuus sit et corpore quiescat.—S. Ambros. *in Apocalyps. Expos.* cap. x.; Appendix ad opera.

the eminent characteristic of his life and of his priesthood.

Such is likewise the character of the numerous legends relative to that epoch of the life of St. John.

According to some, the great Apostle has scarcely disembarked in the harbor of Ephesus when he meets a funeral convoy. It is that of Drusiana, a Christian of that city, dead during the exile of the man of God, without having had the consolation of again beholding him. John stops the procession and resuscitates the corpse, who, with the spectators, blesses the name of Jesus. That resurrection, differently narrated, forms the basis of an account which is met with in a great number of Oriental chronicles.

According to others, such as Abdias, the pretended first bishop of Babylon, John became to his people the object of a regular worship, merited by his benefits. "Some," relates the pseudo-bishop, "sought to touch his hands; others endeavored to raise them to their eyes or to hold them against their breasts, according as they had need. Many were comforted by his words, or healed by the mere contact of his garment." [6]

In the narrative of Abdias miracles abound, as well as sermons. The discourses are easy, elegant, and full of grace; but it is not the inspired and supernatural grace of the eloquence of St. John. The miracles, likewise, want the simplicity of the works of the Gospel. John argues with philosophers, preaches poverty, heals the sick, and resuscitates the dead. The history of Aristodemus and of the poisoned cup, that of Drusiana raised to life, are to be

[6] Apud Ephesum in tanta gratia hominum apostolus exstitit, ut alius manus ejus gauderet contingere, alius applicare eas oculis suis, et pectori admovere, si ita usus exposceret. Plerique, etiam tactu vestis exhilarati, quia tetigerant amictum ejus sanabantur.—Abdias, apud L. de la Barre, *Hist. vet. Pat.*, p. 23.

found in that author, enriched with new and romantic circumstances.

Anastasius the Sinaite represents St. John as meeting with the Apostle Philip at Hierapolis, where the latter preaches the faith of Jesus. But the infidel Phrygians, after putting to death two of his daughters, prepare to slay the father, when John arrives to receive the adieu of his expiring friend, and to console the third daughter, whom he conducts to Ephesus.[7]

Under that variety of narratives it is not difficult to recognize the same basis of early tradition. But no criticism would now be able properly to disentangle them from the parasite excrescences wherewith the too vivid imagination of the Orientals has loaded the subject.

Furthermore, St. John himself abhorred all which introduced falsehood into the history of the saints. He gave proof thereof in condemning a book which began to mingle fabricated fables with the lives of the Apostles. It was the apocryphal account of the travels of St. Paul and of the life of St. Thecla.[8] That history had been embellished at will by a priest of the time, whose aim, openly avowed, was to enhance the glory of St. Paul. That a certain historic basis furnished the theme of the narrative, as the learned Baronius pretends, we may wisely believe; but, in the tissue of facts which yet remain to us, imposture is clearly visible. The author plays at miracles; the character of St. Paul is lessened; romantic fictions profane the austere realities of the Gospel; legend encroaches upon history. Once the breach opened, all would fall a prey to that invasion, and posterity would have been condemned to doubt justly of

[7] Anastas. Sinait. *de Tribus Quadrages.*, apud Cotellier, *Patres veri Apostolici*, t. iii. p. 439.

[8] Apud Bolland. xxiii. Sept. t. vi. Baron. *ad An.* xlvii. Saint-Marc Girardin has published a literary analysis of that narrative.

the sources of the history of her origin. St. John opposed it. Tertullian and St. Jerome tell us that the Apostle summoned before him the priest whose pen had been so free with that great memory. The latter acknowledged his guilt, excusing himself by the desire to add in some manner to the glory of St. Paul. "But has God need of us, and are we to bring stratagem to the service of his cause?" Tertullian and St. Jerome declare that the priest was condemned and deposed.[9]

III.

It is to that same epoch of the life of St. John that we must refer his last two canonical Epistles. From the second century the Church had recognized them as being by the holy Apostle. In the East, Clement, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Origen; in the West, the Catalogue found by Muratori, St. Irenæus of Lyons, and others, attest their origin and guarantee their author. Likewise those Epistles bear such features of resemblance with the Gospel composed by St. John that they alone would suffice to prove them daughters of one father.

The first of those Epistles is addressed to Electa. I cannot adopt the opinion of those who, by that name of Electa, understand a church, a society of elect. Why should we have recourse to that allegorical sense when the literal meaning is quite as plausible? Wherefore might St. John not have addressed that letter to a charitable Christian

[9] Quod si qui Pauli perperam scripta legunt exemplum Theclæ proferunt, sciant in Asia presbyterum, qui eam scripturam construxit, quasi titulo Pauli de suo cumulans, convictum atque confessum id se amore Pauli fecisse, loco decessisse.—Tertull. *de Baptismo*, lib. ii. c. xvii. St. Jerome adds: "Presbyterum convictum apud Joannem quod esset auctor libri et confessum se hoc amore Pauli fecisse, loco excidisse."—Hieronym. *de Script. Eccles.* cap. vii. *in Lucam.*

matron, as it gives us to understand? What strangeness is there in that name of Electa, which, furthermore, we find borne by several personages of that time? Is it not far wiser and simpler to hold to the ancient tradition handed down by the fathers?

One of the most considerable in antiquity and in authority, Clement of Alexandria, tells us that the letter was addressed to a matron of Babylonia.[10] Electa appears therein as the mother of a family, which she brings up in the exercise of faith and of charity. Undoubtedly that noble Christian matron had daughters, since Clement designates that Epistle under the title, already quoted, of Epistle to Virgins. But, guarded as was the house of Electa against contagion from without, evil might penetrate therein. It is to warn her against those pressing perils that the Apostle writes to her; and, in the epistle addressed to one single family, every family may find the light of its duty and encouragement to the noblest virtues.

The Epistle is short. By expression as well as by doctrine it recalls the First Epistle of St. John. The Apostle therein gives himself the title of old man, of elder, or of priest, according to the synonymy of those words in Greek. Besides, the frequent repetitions in that short letter clearly evidence that final period of thought which, after the long meditations of life, reduces all to the unity of a sovereign idea which condenses all others, and which is ever on the lips. For St. John that last word is charity.

He expressed himself thus:

"The ancient to the lady Electa, and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth. . . . Grace be with you, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from

[10] Scripta est vero ad quandam Babyloniam.—Clem. Alex. *Adumbr. ad ii. Joan.* op. t. ii. p. 1011.

Christ Jesus the Son of the Father, in truth and in charity.

"I was exceeding glad, that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

"And now I beseech thee, Electa, not as writing a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

"And this is charity, that we walk according to his commandments. For this is the commandment, that, as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in the same.

"For many seducers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is a seducer and an Antichrist.

"Look to yourselves, that you lose not the things which you have wrought: but that you may receive a full reward. He who revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son.

"If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you. For he that saith unto him, God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works.

"Having more things to write unto you, I would not by paper and ink: for I hope that I shall be with you, and speak face to face: that your joy may be full.

"The children of thy sister Electa salute thee." [11]

Truth, charity—these are the two things which the old man longs to behold reigning upon earth, as he is approaching the nearer their reign in heaven. "O truth! O charity!"

[11] 2 John, integr.

likewise exclaims the Church at the end of each week, "behold the day whereon, after all our troubles here below, we are about to enter into the blessedness of your rest!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

EPISTLE TO GAIUS—HOSPITALITY—THE YOUTH CONVERTED.

I.

WE have already met in this history with the name of Gaius, or Caius. These personages are thus named in the sacred monuments of the first preaching of the Apostles. One is of Macedonia;[1] the other is from the city of Derbe.[2] But it appears that he of whom we are about to speak is Caius the Corinthian, whom St. Paul mentions twice in his Epistles.[3]

Might he not be also the same with Caius the Therapeute, to whom are addressed four letters of St. Dionysius? If, on the one hand, John writes to his friend: "He that doth good, is of God; he that doth evil, hath not seen God," St. Dionysius likewise sends his Caius a letter bearing wholly upon contemplation and the vision of God. In fact, to contemplate was the principal object among the Therapeutes, and was to them the supreme summit of perfection.

Be that identity as it may, Caius distinguished himself by a charity which caused his name to be blessed amid the new churches of Asia Minor. His hospitality rejoiced the hearts of his brethren. Hospitality was no novel thing in that land, where it had been received and praised by Herodotus and by Homer. But Christianity, in re estab-

[1] Acts xix. 29. [2] Acts xx. 4.

[3] We had at first placed him near to St. John at Ephesus, according to the Synopses of St. Athanasius. The opinion which places him at Corinth is better authenticated and more probable.

lishing it, had raised it to a superhuman dignity by representing the guest as the image of God himself. "Use hospitality one towards another without murmuring,"[4] had begun the Prince of the Apostles. "Let the charity of the brotherhood abide in you, and do not forget hospitality," said St. Paul to the Hebrews.[5] "Communicate to the necessities of the saints, and pursue hospitality,"[6] said he to the Romans. Finally, James the Just, addressing the Christians of Asia in his Catholic Epistle, recommended that duty in touching terms which breathe the ardent soul of the friend of St. John: "My brethren, have not respect of persons. For if there shall come into your assembly a man having a golden ring, in fine apparel, and there shall come in also a poor man in mean attire, and you have respect to him that is clothed with the fine apparel, and shall say to him: Sit thou here well; but say to the poor man: Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool. . . . O my dearest brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him?"[7]

The charity of Caius exercised itself by preference toward those missionaries who went afar to spread the light of truth. Eusebius says: "Most of the apostolic disciples in whom was enkindled the love of wisdom, having once distributed all their goods to the poor, went into distant countries to preach the Gospel of Jesus. There they founded churches, placed pastors, wrought miracles, and the multitude, hearing their words, embraced the worship of the true God."[8]

Having freely received, these poor ones of Jesus wished also to bestow freely in their turn. Therefore Christian charity had arranged for preachers, at stated distances,

[4] 1 Peter iv. 9. [5] Hebrews xiii. 2. [6] Romans xii. 13. [7] James ii. 2.
[8] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, in Döllinger, *Origin of Christianity*, t. i. p. 111.

hospitable stations where they found asylum, assistance, and safe conduct, wishing to impose no charge upon the pagans, of whom the church sought nothing save their souls.

II.

St. John had learned that such was the house of Caius the Corinthian. The third of his Epistles was written for the purpose of congratulating him for it. He assumed therein the name of old man, or of priest, as in the preceding; and addressing Caius, the holy Apostle said:

"The ancient unto his dearly beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

"Dearly beloved, concerning all things I make it my prayer that thou mayest proceed prosperously, and fare well as thy soul doth prosperously.

"I was exceeding glad when the brethren came, and gave testimony to the truth in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

"I have no greater grace than this, to hear that my children walk in truth.

"Dearly beloved, thou dost faithfully whatever thou dost for the brethren, and that for strangers, who have given testimony to thy charity in the sight of the church.

"And you do well to bring them forward on their way in a manner worthy of God.

"Because for his name they went out, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

"We ought therefore to receive such that we may be fellow-helpers of the truth."[9]

But the enemy of man endeavored to sow tares among those budding Christian communities. The end of the

[9] 3 John 1-8.

Epistle of St. John denounced with regret a focus of discord in the church wherein Caius exercised his virtues. A certain Diotrephes caused trouble therein by his ambition. That "son of Jupiter," as his name signifies, rebellious against the authority of the venerable Apostle, spared neither so great a soul nor so noble a life in his animadversions. He refused to fulfil the duties of hospitality, acting even against those who received the brethren, and daring to exclude them from the holy assembly. First and sad example of that egoistical and harsh Pharisaism, preoccupied with ambition, referring all to itself, unwilling to understand that to consecrate one's self to God is to devote one's self to men!

What were that schism and that division, and do we find the trace thereof in history?

It is at Corinth that Bede and the most authorized commentators upon the Epistles of St. Paul place the residence of Caius and the focus of the division denounced in St. John. Now, it is to the same city, and about that same date of the year 97, that the saintly Pontiff Clement wrote his epistle destined to put an end to a schism in that church—similar complaint regarding those troubles; similar blame of ambition in competition for supremacy; similar picture of violence exercised upon the brethren. "Revolt has breathed," says the Roman pontiff, "and thence have arisen jealousies, discords, tumult, struggles, and enthralment. The lowly have rebelled against the great; those of humble degree have risen against those in authority; the ignorant against the learned; young men against the elders. The dignity of the episcopate has been disputed. The Apostles predicted it; but, at least, let us learn to respect those whom they themselves have selected. Why do we lacerate the members of Christ?"[10]

[10] *Epist. S. Clement.* apud Cotellier, *Patres Apostol.* t. i.

I know not if, from that accord of time, of place, and of circumstances, we might not deduce that those letters have the one object and treat of the same things. Furthermore, these are the terms wherein St. John expresses himself:

"I had written perhaps to the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, doth not receive us.

"For this cause, if I come, I will advertise his works which he doth; with malicious words prating against us. And as if these things were not enough for him, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that do receive them he forbiddeth, and casteth out of the Church.

"Dearly beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good, is of God: he that doth evil, hath not seen God." [11]

The Apostle ended by praising Demetrius, another Christian, hospitable and faithful. Then, terminating that Epistle like the preceding, he said:

"I have many things to write unto thee: but I would not by ink and pen write unto thee. But I hope speedily to see thee, and we will speak mouth to mouth.

"Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name." [12]

III.

That visit of the churches announced by the Apostle in both of his Epistles was occasionally marked by moving episodes well calculated to reveal to us the state of souls, the diverse customs of that time, and the almost irresistible influence of St. John.

[11] 3 John 9–11. [12] 3 John 13, 14.

The most celebrated is that related by Clement of Alexandria, handed down to us by Eusebius. Christian antiquity has bequeathed us few pages of more pathetic beauty or of simpler or nobler eloquence.[13]

"After the death of the tyrant, John, having returned from the island of Patmos to the city of Ephesus, was urged to repair into the adjacent countries. He went thither to found churches, to establish bishops, and to admit to the functions of the service of God the men who should be designated to him by the sign of the Holy Ghost.

"Now, he was one day in a city of the neighborhood of which some writers mention the name. There, having consoled the brethren by his discourses, the Apostle remarked in the crowd a young man. He was handsome, of noble stature, his face was pleasing, and his soul was more beautiful than his body.[14]

"John took the youth with him, and, presenting him to the bishop, 'Behold, I confide him to you before Jesus Christ and before the church. Jesus Christ will be my witness of the sacred deposit which I remit to you; for it is the treasure of my heart.'

"The bishop promised to have care of him. But the old man again repeated his prayer. Then, having done that, he returned to Ephesus.

"The bishop received the youth into his own house. He educated him, he loved him, he cherished him as in his bosom. Then, finally, he conferred upon him the celestial light of baptism.

"But when he had signed him with the divine seal of the Lord, the bishop began to relax somewhat of his former vigilance. The youth, finding himself thus too

[13] Clem. Alex., apud. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. xxiii. p. 92.

[14] Νεανίσχον ἱκανὸν τῷ σώματι, καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἀστεῖον, καὶ θερμὸν τὴν ψυχὴν ἴδων. . .

early emancipated, soon saw himself surrounded by young men of his own age, idle, daring, and of evil manners.[15]

"At first they invited him to great banquets, where he feasted sumptuously. Next they quickly led him away with them at night when they purposed to rob the property of others. Finally, they perverted him entirely, making him participator in all their crimes.

"Like a spirited horse whose mettle carries him over the precipice, the young wanderer fell into the utmost excesses. He no longer thought of the salvation which comes from God, knew no measure, and sought to outdo his companions; for he esteemed that all was lost for him.

"Therefore, assembling that society of wretches, he formed them into a troop, and he became their chief, the most violent, the most cruel, and the most indomitable of all.

"After a certain space John was again summoned to that same city.

"Having ended all he had to perform, he then addressed the bishop, saying: 'O bishop! now restore to me the deposit which Jesus Christ and myself confided to you in presence of the church whereof you are pastor.'

"The bishop wondered at first, thinking there was question of some deposit of money. But John having said, 'I reclaim from you the soul of our youthful brother,' the priest lowered his eyes, wept, and answered, 'He is dead.'[16] 'How, and by what manner of death?' 'Dead to God; for now he is but a wicked, lost wretch—in short, to speak plainly, a robber. He has quitted the Church, and

[15] Illum vero, prærnatura potitum libertate, æquales quidam sibi adjungunt, desides ac dissoluti et flagitiis omnibus assuefacti. . . . At ille sensim assuescebat pravitati. . . .

[16] Juvenem, inquit, et animam fratris reposco. Tunc senex, demisso vultu suspirans atque illacrymans: Is, ait, mortuus est. . . . Στενάξας κάτωθεν ὁ Πρεσβύτης καὶ τι καὶ ἐπιδακρύσας· Ἐκεῖνος ἔφη τέθνηκε. . .

he dwells on the mountain, which he has seized with an armed troop of men like himself.'

"John, hearing this, rent his garments, beat his breast with sorrow, and sobbed bitterly. 'To what manner of guardian,' said he, 'did I confide my brother! . . . Let a horse be brought me, and furnish me with a guide!' . . . Then, quitting the assembly, he set out immediately.

"He reached the place designated. Guards advanced and took possession of him. But he allowed them their will, and, without demanding mercy, he said to them boldly: 'Lead me to your chief; it is for him that I have come.'

"The chief was armed, awaiting his captive. But having perceived him in the distance, and recognized St. John coming towards him, he was seized with shame, and fled in all haste.

"John, urging on his horse, pursued him, forgetful of his great age, and cried out loudly: 'Wherefore dost thou flee from me, my son? Why dost thou flee from thy father, an unarmed old man? Have pity upon me, my child; fear not. There is still hope of life for thee. I will be thy guarantee with Jesus Christ. If necessary, I will willingly give my life for thee, as the Lord has given his life for us all. I will give my soul to purchase thine. Stop, my son, believe me; it is Christ who sends me.'[17]

"Hearing that, the young man halted; he bent his eyes towards the ground. Then he cast away his arms, and commenced trembling and weeping bitterly.

"John approached him; but the latter, embracing his knees, could only entreat him by his sighs. He was bathed

[17] Τί με φεύγεις, τέκνον, τὸν σαυτοῦ πατέρα, τὸν γυμνὸν, τον γέροντα. Ελέησόν με, τέκνον, μὴ φοβοῦ, ἔχεις ἔτι ζωὴς ἐλπίδα . . . ὑπὲρ σοῦ ψυχὴν ἀντιδώσω τὴν ἐμήν. Στῆθι, πίστευσον, Χριστός με ἀπέστειλεν.

in his tears as in a second baptism. But he still kept his right hand concealed under his garments.[18]

"The Apostle again encourages him and reassures him, swearing to him that he will obtain his pardon from the Saviour. He entreats in his turn; he falls upon his knees. Then, seizing that hand, thenceforth purified, he tenderly kisses it.[19]

"The young man was brought back into the assembly of the saints. John prayed with him. He fasted with him, doing penance together. He healed his soul by his word, as if by a sovereign charm; and he no more quitted him till he had resuscitated him and restored him to the Church."

Such facts have no analogy in pagan antiquity. That same Ionia may indeed have witnessed white-haired old men weeping over their young sons fallen in battle. Later she might have beheld another old man going from city to city, singing the virtue of men and the power of the gods. That power was brutality, that virtue was coarseness. They had not entered the empire of souls. None dreamed of those inspired heralds breathing only peace, announcing but pardon. Dull mythology could comprehend naught of the sublimity of the theology which a fisherman revealed to her for the first time. The new world towards which they were advancing might be discovered in the distance by that novel breath of saintly eloquence, by that perfume of virtue wafted from the yet veiled shores of the future. Youth rushed foremost to struggles far otherwise heroic than ancient battles. Old men raised their fallen children, and bore them back to the fight. A fresh field was opened upon the moral heights whither the faith of the Gospel had just elevated the world, and John yet remained to point out the road of that great conquest.

[18] . . . Μόνην ἀποκρύπτων τὴν δεξιάν.

[19] Γονυπετῶν, αὐτὴν τὴν δεξιὰν καταφιλῶν.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SCHOOL OF ST. JOHN—HIS DEATH.

I.

ST. JOHN had not dwelt so long in Asia without grouping around him a certain number of disciples who received his lessons, inspired themselves with his spirit, and then transmitted it to the distant lands of the East and of the West.

That it is which has received the name of the school of St. John. It was numerous, undoubtedly; and amongst those who frequented it, many are unknown. Others have preserved their memory from forgetfulness by the brilliancy of their virtue or by the splendor of their works; and the history of these disciples casts a final light over that of their master.

Ignatius and Polycarp occupy the foremost places in that school.

Ignatius, whom several authors likewise style Egnatius, is already known to us.[1] Some historians declare him to have been that little child whom the Lord placed amidst the Apostles, saying to them: "Except ye become as this little child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."[2]

[1] See upon St. Ignatius: Bolland. *Acta Sanct.*, 1 Febr. Cotellier, *Patres Ævi Apostolici*, t. i. Halloix, *Ecclesiæ Orient. Scriptorum Vitæ*, in fol. p. 289, Douai, 1533.

[2] Tradunt Græci quod parvulus erat quem Dominus advocatum statuit in medio dicens: Nisi efficiamini sicut parvulus iste. Anastas. *Bibliothec. in Scholiis ad Actionem Primam Octavæ Synodi.* Nicephor. lib. ii. cap. xxxv. Metaphrast., ad xx. Decemb. Item apud Surium, etc.

Himself wrote later to the Christians of Smyrna: "As for me, I knew the Lord Jesus Christ in his flesh after his resurrection."[3] We have mentioned letters attributed to him, purporting to be addressed by him to John and to Mary. Now we find him Bishop of Antioch, successor to Evodius, upon that first see of St. Peter, consecrated, we are assured, by that Apostle himself; then attaching himself to the footsteps of his master, St. John, and receiving from that great man the direction of his life and of his teaching.[4]

Antioch was the Asiatic rival of Ephesus. Built upon the banks of the Orontes, in a fertile plain, the ancient residence of the kings of Syria was one of the great centres where the East and the West exchanged their brilliant and refined cultivation. The beauty of her edifices, her numerous population, her extended commerce, her artistic development, made her, according to Josephus, the third city of the empire. But she was also a city of dissolute morals and of infamous pleasures, shaded by the groves of Daphne, and consecrated by the feasts of Astarte and the mysteries of Adonis.

God, who delights in miracles, had selected Antioch to make her one of the greatest capitals of the faith. The faithful had increased therein more rapidly than in any city of Asia, and there they had first assumed the name of Christians. Ignatius, become their bishop, had surrounded worship with a splendor befitting the genius of those Greeks, in so far, at least, as was warranted by the poverty of its commencements. It is related in his *Life* that, having been transported in a vision to the midst of the melodies of the angels, Ignatius had brought thence celestial music

[3] Ignat. *ad Smyrnenses.*

[4] Οὗτος ὁ θεῖος Ἰγνάτιος, ἅμα Πολυκαρπῷ . . . μαθήτης Ἰωάννου τοῦ εὐαγγελίστου γένεται.—Metaphrast., ad xx. Dec. S. Chrysost. *Op.* t. i. orat. xlii. p. 499.

to his Church of Antioch.[5] Thus hymns of purity began to resound along the shores dishonored by the delirious songs of Syrian priestesses.

If we be not permitted to assist at the frequent conversations between Ignatius and St. John, at least the lessons of the Apostle have left their traces in the authentic letters of the holy martyr. These are fiery traces. Truth and charity have the same language in the writings of the latter and in the epistles of the former. Ignatius, like St. John, preaches the doctrine of the Word; he insists like him, and in similar terms, upon the truth of the flesh of the Son of God made man. Like St. John, he styles the body of Jesus bread, and his blood drink: "It is the bread of God which I desire—that bread which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, Son of David; and I wish no other drink save his blood, source of immortal love."[6] Light, charity, life, chastity, all the words of St. John, flow naturally from his pen. Thus he pretends to be the brother of the Ephesians, because he has received, like them, the doctrine of John. "I desire to be always numbered amongst the Christians of Ephesus, who, by the all-powerful virtue of Jesus Christ, have not wandered from the doctrine of the Apostles."[7]

But it is not only the doctrine of John, it is his charity, which abounds in his letters written to the churches of Asia. These churches are the same wherein John has spread the unction of Jesus Christ—Ephesus, Smyrna, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, and Rome herself, towards which Ignatius was to tread, like St. John, the road of martyrdom. He was loaded with fetters; ten soldiers, whom he styles ten leopards, tormented him by night and by day; they dragged him from Syria to Rome amid a thousand insults; but the hope of his passion consoles him for all. "Now

[5] Socrat. *Hist.* lib. vi. cap. viii. p. 313.
[6] Ignat. *ad Roman.* iv.
[7] Ignat. *ad Ephes.* xi.

do I begin to become a true disciple," said he; "my spirit is already prostrate before the cross." He wishes to be ground under the teeth of beasts, in order to become the pure wheat of Jesus Christ. He forbids the Romans to intercede for him; himself will urge on the beasts who are to be his tomb. There is no longer within his heart a single spark which burns for anything material, as he says; and he compares death to a sunset which precedes the radiant aurora of a divine day.

That bright day dawned. Ignatius is the first of those men of desire to whom John wrote: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome the world. Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Thus Ignatius answered the Emperor Trajan, his judge: "I bear Christ within me; I am styled Christophorus"—such is the name he gives himself in the titles of his letters. Trajan condemned him to the wild beasts, and Ignatius finally hailed the moment whereof he said: "The sword and the cross, broken bones, violence of wild beasts, limbs torn, and the whole body crushed—I welcome them all, provided I obtain Jesus Christ." [8]

II.

Ignatius met upon the glorious route which conducted him to martyrdom another disciple of St. John—Polycarp, of Smyrna. It was of him he said: "Thou art strengthened in God as upon a rock. Watch like the athlete of God. The prize of the combat is incorruptibility and immortality. Remain firm in the truth like an anvil which is struck with blows. It is befitting a great wrestler to be struck and to conquer." [9] Polycarp, on his side, said to the Philippians:

[8] Ἵνα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιτύχω.—*Ad Romanos* iv.

[9] Ignatius *ad Polycarp.* i.

"You have received Ignatius, that model of charity, laden with august fetters, which are the diamonds of the true elect of God." [10]

Polycarp had likewise appeared destined to great things by the marvels surrounding his early childhood.[11] It is said that a holy woman, Callista, warned by a dream, had found him upon one of the routes leading to the city of Smyrna, near the Ephesiac gate. He was one of those children brought from the distant East by merchants who made a traffic of them for the use of the Romans. Callista had purchased him, enfranchised him, brought him up in the fear of God, and endowed him with great wealth, which he made use of to succor the poor. A bishop of that country, named Bucolus, had first instructed him, then ordained him deacon and afterwards priest; finally, one day, feeling death approach, he summoned him to his bedside, took his right hand, and carried it successively to his heart and to his lips with these words only: "Glory be to thee, O Lord!" [12] That was intimating that he bequeathed to Polycarp his apostolate and his bishopric. The nation ratified that choice. A flame shining upon the brow of Polycarp pointed him out to the suffrages of the holy assembly. John consecrated him bishop; [13] and Jerome says that he was the first pontiff of the East.

Smyrna and Ephesus were near neighbors. Polycarp was the most assiduous disciple of St. John; and Irenæus relates that he dwelt upon that great remembrance through-

[10] Polycarp. *ad Philipp.*

[11] See upon St. Polycarp: Tillemont, *Memoirs*, t. ii.; Bolland. *Acta SS.* xxvi. Jan., t. iii. p. 306, edit. Palmé; his life by Pionius; Halloix, *Eccl. Orient. Script. Vitæ;* Cotellier, *Patres Ævi Apostolici.*

[12] Imminente jam morte, Polycarpi manum capit, et primum quidem eam pectori suo apprimit, dein vultui. Quæ cum egisset Bucolus: Gloria tibi, Domine, inquit; itaque obdormivit.—Pion. *Vitæ S. Polycarpi.*

[13] Joannis apostoli discipulus ab eo Smyrnæ Episcopus ordinatus, totius Asiæ princeps fuit.—S. Hieronym. *De Scriptor. Eccles.* xvii.

out his whole life. It was the constant subject of his conversations and of his sermons. Furthermore, the same love for Jesus, the same zeal for the truth, the same indignation against heretics in the disciple and in the master: "Whosoever," said Polycarp in his letter to the Philippians—"whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is Antichrist." That is a textual quotation from St. John. Gnostic impiety caused him such horror, again says Irenæus, that, stopping his ears in order not to hear their blasphemies, the disciple exclaimed: "O my God! to what times hast thou reserved me that I endure similar things!" Then he arose and quitted the assembly.[14]

Polycarp was a missionary bishop like St. John himself. Either by him or by others the truth had been carried to the distant shores of the East and of the West. According to the Gallican martyrology, it was Polycarp himself who installed successively at Lyons Pothinus and Irenæus; so that it is to him France owes her first faith, and through him she might pretend to the title of child and of heir of St. John.[15]

Ignatius, passing through Smyrna, saw Polycarp, and bestowed the kiss of peace upon that brother, who was so soon to follow him to martyrdom. "May we one day be reunited in God!" he had written to him. Polycarp was faithful to that divine rendezvous. We know that Marcus Aurelius, unable to constrain him to blaspheme the God whom he had served eighty-six years, condemned him to the flames.[16]

[14] Si quid tale audisset beatus ille et apostolicus presbyter, aures obturabat et pro more suo dicebat: O bone Deus! in quæ tempora me reservasti, ut ista patiar!—S. Iren. *Epistol. ad Florinum*, apud Euseb. lib. v. cap. ix.

[15] See La Saussaye, *Martyrol. Gallic.*

[16] See his martyrdom in the beautiful letter written by the Church of Smyrna to that of Philadelphia: "Octoginta et sex annos ei servivi, et nullo me affecit incommodo. Et quomodo potero blasphemare regem meum qui me salvavit?"—Bolland. p. 318.

Must we number Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, amid the disciples of John? "Papias," says Irenæus, "was the auditor of John and the friend of Polycarp." And after him St. Jerome: "Papias was the disciple of John and the codisciple of Polycarp."[17] The testimony of Eusebius, pretending the contrary, could not prevail against the affirmation of those who, like Irenæus, are contemporaries. John the priest or the elder, who is represented as the master of Papias, is the same with the Apostle, who gives himself that name in two of his Epistles.

It has been alleged that Papias could not have been the disciple of John, because he has made no mention of the fourth Gospel. An ancient fragment, discovered by Thomasius, attests, on the contrary, that Papias was at first the disciple of the Apostle; in the second place, that, still young, he himself wrote under the dictation of John, and served him as secretary for the holy Gospel.[18]

Papias was eloquent. He possessed that beauty of style and of speech which is a gift of the Greeks, and which led St. Jerome to despair of giving a Latin translation worthy of his writings.[19]

Specially curious regarding the facts of tradition, placed upon the confines of the apostolic age, and as the final echo of the testimony come direct from Jesus Christ, Papias, not satisfied with what he had heard from John, his first master, sought information from all those who had heard the preaching of the Apostles, gathering, as it were, the

[17] S. Iren. *adv. Hæres.* v. xxiii.; S. Hieronym. *De Vir. Illustr.*

[18] Papias nomine, Hierapolitanus, discipulus Joannis carus, in exotericis (exegeticis?) quinque libris retulit. . . . Descripsit Evangelium dictante Johanne recte.—Thomasius, *Catalog. of Bible Manuscripts.* This fragment, found in a codex of the Queen of Sweden, came perhaps from St. Wenceslaus, Duke of Bohemia, and dated from the ninth century.

[19] SS. Papiæ et Polycarpi volumina nec otii mei, nec virium est tantas res eadem in alteram linguam ex primere venustate.—S. Hieronym. *Lib. contra Helvidium*, cap. ix.

crumbs fallen from the table of the Gospels. Five books, which he styled *Expositions of the Words of the Lord Jesus Christ*, were the fruit of his researches. Scarcely any vestige of them remains. Author of the erroneous opinion of the Millenarians, it was to be feared that Papias had mingled his own errors with the traditions which he wished to transmit to us. But Christ would suffer no other *exposition* of his word to exist save that of the Gospel, and the book of man fell before that of God.

III.

"The school of St. John," said the least suspected of contemporary critics, "is that whose consequences are better perceived in the second century."[20] St. Justin, Tatian, Origen, St. Clement, and later Athanasius, will inherit the succession of Ignatius, of Polycarp, and of Papias. But already St. Irenæus prepares to bear it into the land of Gaul. Born about eight years after the death of the Apostle, he is destined to become the link between the two ages and the two worlds. The banks of the Rhone will hear what he learned upon the shores of the Melesus, and he will own himself indebted for his doctrine to the school of St. John. In his letter to Florinus he speaks as follows:

"I saw you in your youth, in Asia Minor, near Polycarp. How eagerly you sought his approbation! I remember those days better than the time now present to me; for the knowledge which we have acquired in childhood grows with our souls and unites itself to them. I could tell you the place where sat the blessed Polycarp when he discoursed, his manner of living, his countenance,

[20] M. Renan, *Life of Jesus*, preface.

and the instructions which he addressed to the people. He related to us how he had dwelt with John and the others who had seen the Lord. He remembered their words and all that he had gathered concerning Christ, his miracles, and his doctrine. Polycarp reported all that conformably to the Scriptures, having learned it from those who had beheld with their eyes the Word of life. And, by the mercy of God, I carefully hearkened to those things, not writing them upon paper, but engraving them on my heart; and, by that same grace, I recall them and incessantly meditate upon them." [21]

But the school of St. John was far larger than Ephesus, larger than Asia; it was everywhere where his Gospel had penetrated souls. Paganism itself felt its influence, and the Apostle, during his life, could see Christianity beginning to transform a world which insulted and persecuted her.

At first, during that century, a strange revolution had taken place in ideas, without any human cause apparently.[22] Letters prove it. A philosopher like Seneca speaks of loving mankind, almost as St. Paul might have done. Pliny the Younger, an advocate, begins to place duty above country.[23] Epictetus preconizes the vast and primitive unity of all men into one single family, whereof God is the father.[24] The harsh genius of Juvenal softened so far as to inform us—novel idea!—that the soul is bestowed upon us in order that we may love one another.[25]

[21] Vidi te cum adhuc puer essem, in inferiori Asia, apud Polycarpum in Ecclesia splendide versantem et conantem ei te probari. Magis enim eorum recordor quam quæ nuper contigere. . . . Disserebat Polycarpus, et quem se habuisse cum Joanne usum familiaritatemque referebat, etc.—S. Iren. *ad Florin.*, apud Euseb. lib. v. ix.

[22] See De Champagny, *The Antonines*, t. ii. bk. ii.; Jules Denys, *Hist. of Moral Ideas in Antiquity*, vol. ii.

[23] Patria, et si quid carius patria fides.—Plin. i. xviii.

[24] Epictet. apud Arrian. iv. xvii.

[25] Juvenal. *Satire* xv. 140 et sq.

Dion Chrysostom teaches us "that all mankind together form one city, one community of brethren, under the authority of God."[26] Now, each of these philosophers, writers, and orators, it has been clearly proven, had closely examined the Christians. A breath of the Gospel has passed over minds even the most dissident. A movement has taken place whereat history marvels; it is "fraternity," as St. Paul styled Christian society, which conquers minds, and which will soon become mistress of souls.

An analogous revolution announced itself in manners. Vengeance in war, yesterday only, the joy of magnanimous souls, is no longer, says Juvenal, but the delight of weak hearts and narrow minds.[27] In social order the slave is about to become a man again; servitude is softened, and men dare to discuss its legitimacy.[28] Workmen are esteemed, labor is honored, conjugal honesty is praised, and princes hasten to open asylums for little children.[29]

It is not, however, that princes are better, that philosophers are wiser, or that poets are better inspired than in the age of Augustus; but it is the age of Christ. The Gospel inaugurates its reign, even in those places where it is not blest. From the cenacle to the street, from the shop to the school, from the agastulum of the slave to the chamber of his master; from the gynæceum to the fireside, from the fireside to the forum, from the forum to the senate, the word mounted to the imperial Palatine, whither it arrived often mutilated and inexact; but, such as it was,

[26] Dion. Chrysostom, *Orat.* lxxx. *de Libertate.*

[27] . . . Minuti
Semper et infirmi est animi exiguique voluptas,
Ultio.
—*Juvenal*, xiii.

[28] Dion. Chrysost. *de Servitute*, xv. p. 242. Senec. *Epist.* v. xix. et ii. vi.; xiv. xix., etc. Plin. *Epist.* xvi. xxxii.

[29] See the inscriptions of Velleia and of Beneventum on the foundations of Trajan. It. Pliny, *Panegyric of Trajan.*

it inspired counsels, forced immorality to blush, came to the assistance of the poor, and, as yet unable to make a new faith, it was already capable of framing a better code of laws.

St. John might die. Last executor of the testament of Jesus, he already beheld the accomplishment of his promises of charity in the world.

For himself, that charity was his sole thought, his only discourse. St. Jerome relates that, reduced by his extreme old age to being unable to repair to the assembly of the brethren, he had himself carried thither, and there he unceasingly repeated to them these words: "Little children, love one another." They would have desired him to say more; but the old man unceasingly uttered the same words: "Love one another. This is the precept of the Lord; if you accomplish that, you need nothing more."[30]

To that time likewise refers the familiar anecdote which Cassian attributes to St. John, and whence he draws a pleasing moral.

"One day," says he, "while John was caressing a partridge, a hunter, who was watching him thus amusing himself, expressed to him his surprise. 'And you,' asked the saint—'do you always carry bent that bow which I see in your hands?' 'Not always,' answered the hunter; 'I unbend it and rest it, that it may preserve its spring and elasticity.' 'Then, young man,' resumed St. John, 'wherefore do you marvel that I likewise unbend and repose my

[30] Cum Ephesi moraretur, usque ad ultimam senectutem, et vix inter discipulorum manus ad Ecclesiam deferretur, nec posset in plura verba vocem contexere, nihil aliud per singulas solebat proferre collectas, nisi hoc: Filioli, diligite alterutrum. Tandem discipuli et fratres, qui aderant, tædio affecti quod eadem semper audirent, dixerunt: Magister, quare semper hoc loqueris? Qui respondit dignam Joanne sententiam: Quia præceptum Domini est; et si solum fiat, sufficit.—S. Hieronym. *Comment. in Epist. Galat.* lib. iii. c. vi.

soul, that it may afterwards mount more freely towards heaven?'" [31]

Heaven had become the aim of John's thoughts and the term of his desires. Bossuet thus expresses it: "Do you not perceive that the old man dies daily through eagerness to die once? Hark how he exclaims: 'Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be.' Again listen to him in his Apocalypse: 'The Spirit and the Bride say: Come!' What does the divine Spouse answer? 'Behold I come quickly—*Ecce venio cite.*' O lengthy instant—*O modicum longum!* He redoubles his sighs and his prayers: 'Come, Lord Jesus—*Veni, Domine Jesu!*'" [32]

The Lord came at last. According to a beautiful belief, it was the Virgin Mary who gave St. John the first tidings of his approaching deliverance: "O my son! you welcomed me to your dwelling when I was upon earth; now come with me into the house of God!" [33]

John's death was gentle and painless. All antiquity agrees upon that point. As to the circumstances surrounding it, the narratives given are far from possessing historical authenticity.

One day, they relate, knowing that his hour was come, John forewarned his disciples, assembled them in the church, broke bread, distributed it to the faithful, and addressed to them this adieu: "May my part be with you, and yours with me." [34]

[31] Cassian. *Collat.* xxvi. cap. xxi. Item, Hincmar Remensis, *in Vita S. Remigii*, apud Surium, Januar. xiii. Item, Mapheus Vegius, *Biblioth. Patr.* t. xxvi. p. 719. Cornel. à Lapid. *in Joan.* xxi. p. 543.

[32] Bossuet, *Panegyric of St. John.*

[33] *Revelations of St. Bridget*, apud Cornel. à Lapid. *Proœmium in i. Epist.* p. 415 col. 2. Item Salmeron. t. x. *Tract. xli.:* "Pro illis ædibus in queis ad tempus erat recepta, beata Virgo excepit Joannem in cœlestibus tanquam peculiarem filium suum."

[34] Pars mea sit vobiscum, et vestra mecum.—Apud Laurent de la Barre,

That done, he walked with some of his followers towards the place of his sepulchre. It was upon the slope of a hill near the city, no doubt Mount Libate, where his beloved Timothy slept in peace. Thence he could for the last time bless Ephesus, stretched at his feet; all the Ionian coast, where rose the churches which he had begotten in the faith; and, beyond the sea, the colonies whither his sons had gone to bear the sacred fire of the Gospel.

Arrived thither, St. John began gently to converse with the brethren, whom he was never more to behold. They attribute to him a final recommendation to keep themselves in the unity of the faith of Jesus Christ, and to flee impiety. But he insisted more strongly than ever upon the commandment of loving one another. Then, extending his arms and raising his eyes towards heaven, the saintly old man became absorbed in prayer.

According to the same accounts, no human eye was witness of the death of St. John. Having dismissed the brethren, John entered the subterranean place of his sepulchre, and the disciples left him there to meditation and to repose. When, some time after, they penetrated therein, John had ceased to breathe, and his virginal soul had returned into the bosom of the Lord.

Some Catholic writers view, with reason, in that representation of the death of the Apostle, but an image of the gentleness wherewith the old man slept in peace. In fact, the picture of a man who descends alive into the tomb is

Abdias. See, regarding the death of St. John, Peter Damian, *Sermo ii de Joanne*. Nicephor. Callixt. *Hist*. lib. ii. cap. xlii. Nicet. Paphlagon. apud *Biblioth. Patrum*, t. xxvii. p. 397. Gregor. Turonensis, in *de Gloria Virgin*, lib i. The most considerable authority is that of St. Augustine (*Tract cxxiv. S Joan*, edit. Migne, col. 1970). He declares that in his time it was believed tha the saint lay in the sepulchre, where he yet breathes. St. Epiphanius (*Hæres*. lxxix.) relates that God gave St John a wonderful death. Dom Calmet esteems that these accounts have no other foundation but the book of the Acts of St. John, a very ancient work, but corrupted by the famous Lucius.

the best figure of his insensible passage from this world into the next.[35]

That blessed death took place, according to Eusebius, in the sixty-eighth year after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the hundredth year of the Incarnation, under the reign of Trajan, consul for the third time. It is from St. Irenæus that we learn that the Apostle lived until that time. According to St. Epiphanius, John must have then been ninety-four years old. The Chronicle of Alexandria, perhaps more exact, represents him as one hundred years of age. It places his death in the one hundred and fourth year of the Christian era, the seventh of Trajan, Neratius Marcellus and Licinius Sura being consuls, St. Evaristus being Sovereign Pontiff of the Church of God.

The tomb of St. John was shown at Ephesus. Later, Pope Celestine, writing to the council assembled at that city: "Above all things, remember that you are sitting in the city wherein St. John preached, which possesses his relics, which you honor."[36] St. Dionysius of Alexandria, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Chrysostom speak of that tomb. A church was early built over those remains of the friend of Jesus; it was named the Apostolic. To-day, in the miserable village which marks the site of Ephesus, a mosque rises upon the ruins of a very ancient Christian church. It is thought to be the remnants of a basilica which long preserved the name and the body of St. John.

Marvellous legends soon added to the renown of that tomb. Some declared that scarcely was the sepulchre closed over the body of the Apostle ere a great light had enveloped it. Others relate that a fountain had sprung up

[35] Dom Calmet, *Dissert. upon the Death of St. John*, p. 17

[36] Ante omnia vos præcipue considerare, iterum atque iterum recolere decet hæc loca esse, quibus Joannes apostolus prædicaverit, cujus reliquias præsentes honoratis.—Cœlestin. Pap. *ad Conc. Ephes.*

on that spot, whence flowed a stream clear as crystal. Others tell of a manna, white as snow, which clothed the ground with a mantle of purity. Finally, a far greater number pretend that St. John had been resuscitated, as God could not leave in the corruption of the tomb the virginal body which had reposed upon his heart.[37]

But it is in the bosom of his Master that St. John found his immortality; it is likewise in the Gospel, where he unceasingly lives, acts, and speaks as the disciple, the friend, and the witness of God. All is filled with his testimony, and an entire century bears the impress of his word. The religions of his time and its various philosophies comment and elucidate it; the facts of his existence mingle with the events of a luminous epoch. Jerusalem and Bethsaida, Ephesus and Rome herself, religiously guard the trace of his passage; a vast continent and the isles claim him as their father in the faith; a wonderful renovation of souls dates from his arrival upon the soil of Asia; his name is inscribed upon the foundations of the most distinguished churches; the tradition of ages is attached to his steps, and marks all his movements; a long echo throughout the writings of the fathers transmits each of his words, thenceforth immortal; his soul, living in his book, throbs and palpitates in a school of disciples who will quickly depart to make it known to the world. What figure appears in a more noble cortége than that of the Apostle St. John?

And what is that existence of the disciple in history compared with that rendered him in their veneration by all those souls who demand from him their rule of faith, their code of duties, their model of virtue, their lessons of the

[37] S. Aug. *in Joan.*, edit. Migne, p. 1970. S. Ambrose, *Sermo in Psalm cxviii.* Nicephor. *Hist.* lib. ii. cap. xlii. See, regarding that death and that resurrection, the opinions of the fathers in the dissertation of Dom Calmet, at the head of his explanation of the fourth Gospel.

present life, and their hopes of eternity? What are the temples raised to him throughout the universe contrasted with those which he has made for himself within hearts which seek to resemble him? For those are all the hearts wherein the Son of God has his place; for how could we love Jesus without likewise loving the disciple whom he so fondly cherished? A sort of reflection of the divine face of his adorable Master remains upon his features. It is the perpetual object of the contemplation and of the homage of the saints. It is likewise the subject of despair of those who seek to reproduce a faithful image thereof, but whose insufficiency has more than once struck me during the course of this work.

Therefore, O John! I wish, in ending, to claim your pardon. You have dazzled me by your holy beauty; you have attracted me by your charity; I have occasionally seen, as it were, your pure face passing before me, have heard the accent of your voice. And if I assumed the pencil to essay this feeble sketch of your admirable soul, it was in the hope that, having been the disciple and the friend of the Son of God, you would, better than all others, teach us to know him and to love him.

4511 922.1
J53

Baunard, M. L.
AUTHOR
Life of the Apostle St. John.
TITLE